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The Bell Rung to Prayers.

An Earneſt PERSUASIVE TO THE *Daily Worſhip of* GOD IN Every FAMILY.

Calling upon all Houſes to be Houſes of PRAYER.

By *BEN. JENKS*, Rector of *Harley*, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of *Bradford*.

Pour out thy Fury — upon the Families that Call not on thy Name, Jer. 10. 25.

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An Humble

PERSUASIVE

TO THE

Duty of Prayer,

IN

FAMILY.

By a PRAYER.

TO THE
READER.

I Thought I had done with the *Preſs*, and was concluding, that I ſhould Trouble it no more. But I find yet another *Cauſe* to Plead, further than my Voice can be Heard. And in the *Defence* of that Cauſe, I ſend this *Sound* into the World, and would have theſe *Papers* to Speak, as well as they can, even when I am *Dead*.

Beſides the too Common *Neglect* of God's Worſhip, in ſo many Families, Obſerved and Bewailed by all, whoſe Eyes he has Opened, which might give ſufficient *Occa-*

ſion for the preſent *Exhortation*: A very Pious *Lady*, for whoſe Excellent Perſon, and Exemplary Family, I have a juſt Eſteem and high Regard, was pleas'd to deſire this of me, That in the next Edition of my *Prayer-Book*, I would add more than I had there ſaid in the *Preface*, to put all *Families* upon their *Prayers*. That I might not only ſhew ſuch as needed the Help, *How* they ſhould do it: But alſo, (if poſſible) be Inſtrumental, ſo to *Prevail* with them, that they might not ſtill leave it *Undone*.

And ſome late Obſervations that I have made, give me cauſe to *Enlarge* the Complaint in that Preface, of the *Dulneſs and Indifferency of Sinful Men, to that which is beſt for them, and which moſt highly Concerns them; That they are not apt to be Solicitous, (ſo as they uſe to ſhew themſelves in their Worldly Concerns) to Seek after the Proviſions and Conveniencies for the Spiritual*

Life, unleſs theſe fall directly in their way, and are ſet juſt before them. For I find that ſome will not vouchſafe, but ſo much as to *Uſe* them, even when they have them *Ready* by them.

Now, though the *Impreſſion* of that Imperfect *Piece* is gone off; yet I am not Determined by thoſe Solicitations, which would put me upon *Another*. Becauſe my End being already gain'd; in ſeeing it *Communicated*, and all Hands filled, as far as I thought my ſelf *Obliged*: I have no Motive now to be further concerned: Unleſs it were to make ſuch *Corrections*, and to fill up ſuch *Defects*, as might give my ſelf (if not others) ſome better *Satisfaction* in that Performance.

But what I have here to offer, would be too Large to be Inſerted in a *Preface:* And the Time alſo might be too *Long*, to wait for that Opportunity. Therefore this *Service* to Souls, I now give out by itſelf.

itſelf And though, I know, it might be much better done by many others, if they would think fit ſo to Concern themſelves; yet in the mean time, accept it in ſuch manner, as can at preſent be done, by one that is full of *Care* and *Deſire* to Promote it as far as lies in the Power of

Thy

B. J.

THE

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A PERSUASIVE TO Family-Prayer:

OR, AN Earnest Exhortation to the Daily Worship of God in Every Family.

MY present Undertaking may seem very *Facile* and ordinary: But I expect to find it exceeding Weighty, and attended with no small *Difficulty*. How I shall Acquit my self, and come off in the Accomplishment, I dare not be Confident to *Presage*: But that I could have no *Rest* in my Spirit, till I had *Engag'd* in it, I am best able to make Report.

'Tis no *New Project* that I am upon. For Abundance of *God's Labourers* are afore-hand with me; and have here beſtowed their Pains, over and over. The thing has been *often* done; And yet, Alas, it ſtill needs to be done. And whether or no I ſhall ſay any thing, but what has been ſaid; God grant I may ſay ſomething, that ſhall take *Effect*. I can but uſe my weak Endeavours, and Wait and Beg for the *Bleſſing*, from Him that has the Power to Perſuade *throughly*; where even St. *Paul*, the Chief Speaker, can do it but *Almoſt*.

Chriſtians! I addreſs my ſelf to you all. That as you are *called* the Lords, So you may *Call upon* the Lord: and Approve your ſelves his *true People*, in being a *Praying People*; and make it appear you are the *Children of God*, by crying *Abba-Father*. Yea may not only give yourſelves to Prayer, and the humble Signification of your Deſires to God ſtill, for the obtaining of all that you would have, every one *Apart* by yourſelves; (Which I know none that own the Chriſtian Name, who do not pretend to:) But may Accuſtom your ſelves to Pray alſo *Conjunctly*, and all together in your ſeveral *Families*. Which is that part of the Service of God, that my thoughts and Endeavours are now at work, to Engage all whom I can prevail with, to ſet upon it, and to ſhew their Zeal and Fidelity in it. 'Tis not the *Manner* of doing, that I am now Preſcribing; Nor the Set *Time* in particular, when you ſhall do it. But my chief Buſineſs is to Propoſe and Recommend the *Thing* it ſelf: And ſo to Quicken your *Care*, and Win your *Conſent*, that it may be *Daily* and *Duly* done.

And my Application is Firſt to the *Maſters*, that have the Inſpection and Conduct of *Families*.

lies. For the *Houſes* have no *Ears*: And O that I may not find ſome of the *Owners* as *Deaf*, as if they had none! 'Tis You, Sirs, that muſt Set the *Faſhion* to your People; and not only Tell them of their Duty, but go before them in it. 'Tis your *Example* that will go furtheſt, either to *Deboch*, or to *Reform*, your Houſes. And you cannot do *Well* or *Ill*, but it will be like to *Affect* the Reſt, as well as your ſelves. And of the ſame *Strain* as the Maſter is, much thereafter uſe to be the Children and the Servants. For they will think themſelves Concern'd to Write after his *Copy*; if but to be the *Eaſier* under him, and the more *Acceptable* to him. So that you ſhall not only Anſwer for your ſelves, but for all the Members of your Families; that were Hurt, or Bettered by you. According as you go in and out among them and lay the *Patern* before them; It may be as much as their *Souls* are worth: And they may have cauſe to *Bleſs* you, or to *Curſe* you, for ever. They now ſo much *Depend* upon you, and are ſo much *Determined* by you; That what you *Are*, and what you *Do*, goes for *Law* with them, and has the greateſt Influence upon them, to make them Be and Do *Alike*. If you then that ſhould be the *Stays* and *Guides* of your *Domeſticks*, are *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, *Brawlers*, or *Muck-worms*; without any *Savour* of God's holy Religion; and no *Lovers* of Prayers; but Cold and *Luſtleſs* to ſet them Forward; even Loathing any thing, which Looks that Way; and Introducing ſomewhat in its Room, more to your *Mind*, but leſs to your *Credit*. O what Diſorderly wretched Houſes then are you like to have? And who can expect that thy *Son* and thy *Daughter*, thy *Man-ſervant*, and thy *Maid ſervant*, ſhould be much Better? When thou who ſhouldſt go to *Pray* with them, and ſhut

up the Day, with the *Worſhip* of him that gave it; Inſtead of doing them any Good, Lyeſt only as a *Log* in their way, to Stumble and Hurt them: When there is nothing of God to be ſeen in thee, beyond thy *Human Shape*, Nothing of God to be Heard from thee, but in thy *Oaths* and *Curſes*: O how Deadly then is thy Caſe? when thou art in thy *Blood*, and the Blood of all the *Souls* too, that are under thee, and ſo Abuſed by thee, will be *upon* thee! Such a *Maſter*, ſuch a *Father*? Thy *Servants*, and thy *Children* may feel the *Plague* of thy Ungodlineſs upon them, to all Eternity. As a great *Oak* Falling, Cruſhes down all the *Underwood* before it, So thy Falls and *Miſcarriages* are fatal *Breaches* upon thy whole Family. Thou art the *Ignis Fatuus*, that Leadeſt them out of the way and Teacheſt them to Tranſgreſs. Thou art the *Jeroboam*, that makeſt them to Sin. Thou haſt the *Charge* of them; But ſo *Betrayeſt* the Truſt, that inſtead of being the *Better*, they are all the *Worſe* for thee, and will riſe up in the Judgment againſt thee.

The Lord give thee *Eyes* to ſee thy Caſe; and a Heart firſt to *Judge* thy ſelf; and Grace to *Repent* and *Amend* the matter; before thou Fall, and thy *Houſe* Fall upon thee; and ſink thee into the deepeſt Damnation, never to get up again. O that thou maiſt Remember thy ſelf, and thy Accounts, and Turn to the Lord, and walk more Regularly and piouſly in thy Houſe: To *Repair* ſome of the Miſchief that thou haſt done; and yet to *Benefit* the Souls that have been ſo much *Damnified* by thee. For thou art a Vain man, to ſtand Rallying at thy Houſe; and complaining of *Stubborn* Children, or *Treacherous* Servants, when thou wilt not give thy *Example*, nor thy *Prayers*, to make them *Better*: Though by this means,

(for

(for ought thou knewest,) Thou might'st be the happy Instrument of their *Conversion* and *Salvation*.

But Blessed Souls! That set a quite *contrary* Patern! And instead of *Leading* others into Sin, are all for *Helping* them out of their Sins: And thus Serve the Lord, and Assist their Ministers, in Turning many to Righteousness; and by their Examples and their Interest, by their Speaking and their Doing, Guide their Neighbours in the *Progress* to Heaven; Quicken their *Families* to Seek the Lord; *Trace* them out a fair *Path* of his holy *Worship*; and Encourage and set them forward, in all the ways of Sobriety, Charity, Decency, Godliness, and Honesty. A Comfortable Account shall they have, and a Sentence full of Joy from the Lord. Their *Families*, their *Neighbours*, shall rise up and call them *Blessed*: Yea God, even their own God shall *Bless* them; and make them enjoy the Fruits of their *Labours*, and of his *Grace* and Bounty, in the Heavenly never-ending Glory.

O that you would all so lay this to heart, as to think your selves more Concern'd in the Godly *Regulation* of your *Families*; and the narrow Circumspection of your own Conversation among them! For this is the main *Indication* and Discovery of what a man is, By his Conduct and Behaviour at *Home*; and the Rules and Orders that he keeps in his *House*. Because Men *Abroad* usually go upon their *Guard*, and are more Reserv'd and Demure in Strange Company; So *Concealing* themselves, as to appear *Other* and *Better* than really they are. But where they may be *Bold*, among their *own* People, There they are wont to shew themselves, in their proper *Shapes* and *Colours*. That you may then Judge according to *Truth*,

Here take better *Notice* of your ſelves: And that you may alſo rightly Inſtruct and Edify *Others*, Take better *Heed* to your own Ways. For they will Watch the Steps of your *Feet*, more than Mind the Words of your *Advice*; and there Venture to Slight the beſt of your *Counſel*, where they ſee you take the Liberty, to Run out *another* way.

Nor yet think it all, to ſet ſome good *Examples*, for them to Follow; (Letting them ſee, That you are not *Hypocrites* abroad, and *Devils* at Home:) But uſe all the *Intereſt* and *Authority* you have with them, to do them Good; and to make them ſuch as God would have them. For ſo (you know,) The Lord commended that great *Father of the Faithful*; Gen. 18. 19. *I know him, that he will Command his Children, and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord.* You that are Over them, muſt Lay your *Charge* upon them: And here is the beſt way of ſhewing your Authority: and that you are Reſolved to be *Maſters* in your own Houſes: When you Declare, So I expect it, and ſo I will have it, from all the Members of my Family; Such and ſuch *Orders*, at all times; and our *Offices* of Joint Prayer and Devotion, at ſuch and ſuch Appointed Times, and a Conſtant Serious *Attendance* upon them. And thus Reſolve, not only for your ſelves, but for all under your *Roof*: With that great *Exemplar*, as well as *Commander*; Joſh. 24 15. *As for me, and my Houſe, we will Serve the Lord.*

And then are you fit indeed to be *Maſters* of Houſes; When you take not Care only of the *Work*, and the *Diet*, and outward Conveniencies of your People; but chiefly of their *Religion*, and their *Souls*: To bring them under the *Yoke* of Chriſt; and to Train them up in the *Nurture* and Admonition of the Lord. And though you cannot

not Undertake for them, to make them all what they ſhould be: Yet muſt you Reſolve, That it ſhall not ſtick upon you; as the *Fault* of *your* Conduct, if they be not. For too commonly, their *ill Manners* fly in your Faces; and Upbraid your *Miſmanagement*. How elſe could Children be ſo Rude, and Ripe for *Hell*, even before they Knew any thing of *God* and *Heaven*; If you gave them better *Education* and *Example*? Durſt *Servants* Swear and Curſe, and Talk filthy, and Act as Scandalouſly, If their *Maſters* were Pious, and ſhew'd no *Countenance*, but their *Abhorrence*, of ſuch Wickedneſs; and gave Themſelves *Patterns* of the Contrary? But how many do little or nothing Regard, What their Servants are towards *God*, if they Carry but any thing *Fair* towards them? And may be readier to *Scoff* a poor Servant, that *Fears* the Lord; Than to *Check* a Vile Wretch, that is as *Vain* and *Looſe* as themſelves. They Drive their Servants even only as a *Team* of Brutes: And all they expect from them, is to do their *Work*: whatever becomes of the Work of *God*. They think it enough to Provide for their *Bodies*, Let their *Souls* Sink or Swim. And the greateſt Teaching they give their Children, is to be *Thrifty* and *Starving*, to make their Part good in the World. Or if they do Teach them any *Catechiſm*, or Heads of Religion; Alas, what Good is it like to do them; As long as they ſee the Parents ſo ſhamefully *Contradict* their own Inſtructions? They are *Children* indeed, that have not ſo much natural *Logick*, as to Argue with themſelves, ——If the Service of God were of ſuch *Neceſſity*, as we are told, why then do our Parents ſo *Neglect* and throw it by? They are grown to *Diſcretion*; and in all Appearance, much Nearer to another *World*, than we: Therefore what makes

them ſo *Careleſs* of Religion, and do nothing at it, but what meer *Cuſtom* leads them to, once a Week at *Church*? Do they think, it's only for *Children* to meddle with; and that *Men* have ſomewhat elſe to do, and are got *above* it? Children have the depraved Nature in them, that will make them *Witty* enough, to hit upon any ſuch *Evaſion*, to throw off their Duty. And their Parents way and Practice, ſhall do more to make them *Vicious*; Than all their Injunctions, yea and their Corrections alſo, to make them *Pious*.

And ſo *Servants* find it their *Intereſt*, to be Like their Maſters. And if the Maſter be againſt all ſerious *Godlineſs*; The Servant then thinks he muſt not be ſo *Impudent*, to Appear for it: Nor offer to be *Better* than his *Betters*. No, He will ſhew more *Manners*, and better *Diſcretion*. A *Word* from his Maſter, ſhall do more to Diſgrace, Wound, and Stab Religion; and ſtrike it *Dead*; Than many a *Sermon* from the Miniſter, to Recommend, Endear, and keep it *Alive*. And thus ſuch *Tutors* train up *Pupils*, fit to Serve and Strengthen the Kingdom of the *Devil*. Here the *Seeds* are Sown, and the *Trees* nurs'd and rear'd up, which (when *Tranſplanted* abroad) help to *Poyſon* all the Earth with their curſed *Fruits*. And here, that filthy Corruption, which Education ſhould *Tame* and Vanquiſh, is made *Rampant* and Incurable.

O that all of you who are concerned, would put to their helping Hands, to rectify this Error in the firſt *Conception*! And caſt their *Salt* into theſe *Fountains*, that ſerve all the Kingdom: And do that good Service to the *Publick*, as to Serve God more faithfully, in their *Private* Capacity! For the *Reformation* among us, which the *King*'s moſt Excellent *Majeſty* now *Declares* for, and which he

Promiſes

Promiſes to Promote at *Home*, in the Perſons who are Near his own *Sacred* Perſon; It does Depend upon the Reformation of particular *Families*: Thoſe little *Kingdoms*, where every Maſter is as the *Sovereign*, to give Laws to all his Houſe. And without you, (whom I am ſpeaking to,) it will not be done. But by your *Combined* Aſſiſtance, The *Particulars*, (of which the *Whole* conſiſts,) will be *Reformed*: And ſo God's Anger will be *Averted*, and the Nation *Saved*. And where you cannot have All, to bear you Company, yet Strive, whatever you are able, to make a *Majority*. And by that Means, you will moſt oblige your *Country*; and be ſure every one, to Provide for the Security, and the Felicity of his own *Family*.

Now hitherto I have been dealing in *Generals*; To prepare the way to my Main Deſign: And that is, particularly and eſpecially, to engage you all to the Serious Practice of *Family-Prayer*. For as there will be no true Happineſs, without ſincere *Holineſs*: So there can be no Holy, Sound *Reformation*, without humble and earneſt *Supplication*. And it was a true *Connexion*; (tho' the Application ſeems too Severe, to be faſtned upon ſo Good a Man) *Job* 15. 4. *Thou caſteſt off Fear, and Reſtraineſt Prayer before God.* For they do not indeed *Fear* the Lord; that do not *Call* upon him. *Not to Call upon the Lord!* That is made the very Upſhot of all the Baſeneſs and Wickedneſs recited; *Pſal.* 14. *ver.* 4. All other Goodneſs will do no Good, if this be wanting. And all other Care and Pains will ſignify Nothing; If thus the Lord be not Prevail'd with, to add his *Bleſſing*. *Except the Lord Build the Houſe, they Labour in Vain that Build it*, *Pſal.* 127. 1. And except ye ſeek and beg this beſt *Edification* of all

your Houſes, at his Hands; you are as *Vain*, to *Expect* it. When as all hangs upon his Bleſſing: And even that Bleſſing he has *Suſpended* upon your *Praying*? And ſo, (after a ſort,) has put the matter into your own *Hands*: Whether you will have all the Good which you deſire, in the way of *Prayer*: Or elſe Loſe the *Bleſſing*, for want of *Asking*.

Now that I may not ſeem to put upon you any *Unreaſonable* Service; or to urge you to the thing, that is of no *Neceſſity*, or of no *Importance*: I will endeavour to ſhew you the *Reaſons* for it; and alſo to Anſwer the *Objections* againſt it. And after I have given a few Words of Advice for the *Management* of it; I will add ſome more of *Perſuaſion*, to Quicken you to it; and conſtantly to go on, and Perſiſt in it.

In the Reaſons for it, I would let you ſee both your *Obligation*, and your *Encouragement* to it: And not only convince you, That it is your Duty; but Satisfy you, That it is alſo your *Intereſt*; and every way as *Good* as it is *Needful* for you.

1. I Argue from the *Obligation*, That *Family-Prayer* is your *Duty*, and the Duty of all Families. God having ſignified his *Pleaſure*, to bind you to it: Therefore you ought to make *Conſcience* of it: And not to look upon it as a matter of *Indifferency*; left at your Choice; but of *Neceſſity*, to Oblige your Conſcience. The Command and Injunction is ſo Clear and Frequent for *Prayer* it ſelf, To Call upon the Lord, and Bleſs his Name; that I never heard any *Diſpute* it: But even they who do nothing at it, will yet ſpeak for it, and talk of *Serving the Lord, and Praying to God*; when yet they neither Mind nor Care, How or When it ſhall be done. And the Command is as Expreſs, To *Pray every where*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. and to *Pray Always*, *Luke* 18. 1. And by this Praying

Every

Every Where, and *Always*. What can we understand Leſs, Than that we ſhould do it, in all Places, and at all Times, that are *Fit* and *Proper* for it? Now in your Families, Have you not fair *Conveniencies* for it, and inviting *Opportunities*, to put you upon it? More and Better, (I think,) than any where elſe, unleſs the *Church*. For there ſure, Two or Three, or more, may *Meet* together, in our *Lord's Name*; as well as upon any other Accounts. And there have the Advantage and *Talents* put into their Hands; which they are bound to Uſe and Improve, to the *Honour* of their Lord; and to the Promoting of their *Mutual* Salvation. And it is their wilful Fault, and their wicked Neglect; if they let *Slip* thoſe Advantages, and *Bury* thoſe Talents. Sure, if they do Regard the great *End* of their Living; They will think themſelves infinitely *Concern'd*, to Imploy them to better purpoſe: And not count it more Material to attend their *Backs* and their *Bellies*; than to ſerve their *God*, and ſave their *Souls*.

He that in his *Providence*, has ſo Ordered their Being, and the *Circumſtances* of their Living, may well expect it from them, That they ſhould *Recognize* and Adore him, in their *Joynt*, as well as *Single*, Capacity: Not only as *Individual* Perſons, but a little *Body* and Society, brought together, even for the purpoſe; To joyn their Forces in the Common Service of their great Founder, and continual Benefactor, and ſtrive Together in Prayer. This ſeems to be given for the main End of their *Conjunction* in a Family: *Acts* 17. 26—7. *God that made the World, has determined the bounds of their Habitation, That they ſhould* Seek *the Lord*. Not that they ſhould *Forget* and *Diſown* the Supream Head of the Family; and *Cohabit*, as if they had no *Relation* to him, nor *Dependance*

upon

upon him, Not any *Homage* and *Tribute* to pay him.

You Maſters have a *Power*, which you ought to uſe for your great Maſter in Heaven; To *Convene* your People for his Worſhip. For they are not only *Near* in Place, but ſtand in Readineſs at your *Call*. And you are ſo *Joyn'd* in mutual Relations together; that it is to be ſuppoſed, You ſhould be more heartily concerned for one another, and more forward to *Contribute* your Aſſiſtance in the Service, that tends ſo much to the greateſt Good of all your Souls. Here then is the Obligation, not only of godly Zeal and Piety, but of Brotherly Love and *Charity*, lying upon you. And though you pretend to Pray every one *Apart*; yet you look like a kind of *Houſe-Schiſmaticks*, if you cannot Agree, to do it in *Conjunction*, and ſuch Joynt-Worſhip; which you ſhould ſtill Covet, as much as you can have it, To ſhew that you are for *Practiſing*, as well as *Believing*, the Communion of Saints.

You that have the Care of the Reſt, How can you ſhew your Care better, than in making, the beſt Proviſion you can for their *Souls*. That theſe alſo may have their daily *Meals* with you, as well as their Bodies. And if you muſt take Care that they *Worſhip* God; May not you be better ſatisfied, to ſee them *Joyn* with you; than to follow them every one to their *Privacies*? As to which, You may Exhort them; but there you muſt be Fain to Leave, and *Truſt* them. You are allowed *Teachers* in your own Families: You have there authority for it; yea and a Command to it, *Deut.* 6. 7. And how can you better *Teach* them, than in Teaching them to *Pray*? That ſo they may be all Taught of *God*. And then what ſo Effectual Method of Teaching them to *Pray*, as

to

to *Exemplify* it to them, in your Daily *Practice*, and to go before them in the *way* of Prayer?

I hope you will readily acknowledge, That God the Lord of your Family is to be Honoured by you, in every *Relation* and *Capacity*: And that he ſhould not have the leſs Honour, but the more, from *Maſters*; Becauſe he has Honoured you with that *Authority*, above the reſt of the Family. And if you muſt Honour him in the moſt *Solemn*, and beſt manner, that you are able; I ſhall leave you to judge, Whether you do not Viſibly pay him the Greater Honour, in Falling down to him, before your *Family*; and Obliging them all to *Joyn* and Aſſiſt you, in the Adoration, Than only to Steal into a Corner, and do it by your-ſelves. You give *Glory* to God, even in *Confeſſing* your Sins: And as you Sin together, ſo it looks like a *Concern* for his *Honour*, Humbly to Confeſs it all together: To ſhew, That though you be all Frail Creatures, yet you do not Hold together a-gainſt him, as a Cluſter of *Rebels*: But throw your ſelves upon your *Submiſſion*, before him; and make all the Satisfaction, that you are able, to him.

And let me mind you to Conſider, yet further, Whether you have not *Bleſſings* to the Family, as ſuch, which therefore you ought to *Own* all toge-ther? Even for this very *Privilege*, and ſuch precious Opportunities as you have, to come in-to the Preſence of God; and Pour out your Com-plaints and Deſires before him; Sure you are bound to Bleſs and Praiſe him. And can you *Live* all ſtill upon his *Bleſſings*; and yet *Smother* all the Kindneſs of Heaven in a baſe *Diſregard*? Can you Live together, and make no Acknow-ledgments together, of your *Joynt-Obligations* to the Lord? When you are all ſo much Beholden to him, that you Live continually upon him?

Yea,

Yea, are you not all *Chriſtians*, that is, Perſons Devoted, as *Holy to the Lord*? And muſt not your *Houſes* then and Societies, that are made up of ſuch, be ſo *Devoted* too? as a *Generation of them that Seek him*, *Pſal.* 24. 6. You may read; *Lev.* 27. 14. Of a man *Sanctifying his Houſe*, *to be Holy to the Lord* And the Title of the 30th *Pſalm*, is, *A Song at the Dedication of* David's *Houſe*. Now all the *Houſes* of Chriſtians ſhould be ſo *Conſecrated*; becauſe the *Inhabitants* are. And every one of your Houſes ſhould be the *Houſe of God*; A *Beſkel*, or *Temple*, where he dwells. Thus you hear of the *Church*, in ſuch or ſuch a Man's Houſe, *Rom.* 16. 5. *The Church in Aquila and Priſcilla's Houſe*. *Col.* 4 15. *The Church in Nymphas's Houſe*. *Philem.* 2. *The Church in thy Houſe*. And where are but *Three*, though *Laymen*, (in the Judgment of *Tertullian*,) There's a *Church*. And what a *Church* is that, where they do not *Pray* and *Praiſe* together? *In his Temple every one ſpeaks of God's Honour*, *Pſal.* 29 9. Not only each by *themſelves*; but all in a Body. If not, it's doubted they belong to another Lord, and that their Houſes are yet Profane: and Unhallowed *Chappels of Eaſe* to the God of this *World*; and ſuch *Dens* of Wickedneſs, where *Satan's Throne* is: and He the Lord *Paramount*, to imploy them, about other ſort of Buſineſs; and to *Intercept* their *Homage* to the *Rightful Sovereign*: whoſe Honour and Glory he *Envies*, and *Hates*, and *Hinders*, all that ever he is able. And will you be Rul'd by ſuch an *Enemy*, to with-hold the Rights of Him, who *Owns* and *Keeps* you all? Will you be Children of *Belial*, *that Deſpiſe their King*, *and bring him no Preſents*? 1 *Sam.* 10. 27. When you hold *All* from him; will you pay no *Suit and Service* to him? Will you grudge him ſo much as the poor Acknowledgment

knowledgment of your *Prayers*? And think that little, *Quit-Rent* too much for him to have? You ſhew then what you would do, if it were left all to your *Ingenuity*: when you can thus *Embezzel* from him, againſt ſo much of his Declared Pleaſure. And does not Conſcience here *Arreſt* you for this Debt, due to the *Crown* of Heaven; and hold you in *Durance*, till you pay it? For can you ſay, in this caſe, That you want the *Knowledge* of his Will; if you had but the *Will* to do it? Does not he who Promiſes his Bleſſed *Preſence in the midſt of Two or Three Met together in his Name*, *Matth.* 18.20. So give you to Underſtand, How much he is *Pleaſed* with the Service? And is not his *Bleſſing* upon Praying-Families, in the Proſperity of their Souls, (if not of their other Affairs alſo) to make them, in all real Goodneſs, afore-hand with the reſt of their Neighbours; A *Viſible Proof*, How well he likes and approves of their doing?

But does that *Menace*, *Jer.* 10. 25. of the *Lord's Fury to to be Poured out upon the Families that Call not on his Name*; nothing Affect you? What if Families there denote *Tribes*, the *Stock* or *Kindred*? Yet the *Leſſer* ſure is included in the *Bigger*: and Parity of Reaſon will bring it down to *Families* properly ſo called. And though *Calling on his Name*, imports *all the Worſhip of the true God*: Yet that *Chief* Part is never to be left out, which is ſo Eminent, that it gives *Denomination* to the whole. But I would not have you to Venture that *Wrath*, upon any *Private* Interpretation of that *Text*, (more to your *Fancy*, than your *Safety*;) Leaſt you ſhould be convinc'd of your Error, by a dreadful Conſequence. Indeed the Curſe has already *Enter'd and Seiz'd*, even in an Apparent manner, upon moſt *Prayerleſs Families*; that are ſo many ſad and fearful *Monuments* of Heaven's Indignation

dignation, and an *Angry God* Frowning upon them: in thoſe worſt of all his *Judgments* on this ſide Hell: that is, To be given up to the *Reprobate Senſe*, and *Vile Affections*; To *commit all Uncleanneſs even with Greedineſs*; and *fall from one Wickedneſs to another*, without any Stop or Reſtraint. Yet ſuch is the *Supply*, that uſes to ruſh into thoſe Families, where *Prayers* are thruſt out. Which is enough to make you ſet up Prayers in all your Houſes; If but to cry mightily to God, for this one thing; From ſuch dreadful *Signs* and *Diſcoveries* of thy Everlaſting Wrath, *Good Lord deliver us.*

And if you do not think your Houſe-Prayers a *Neceſſary* Duty; I can tell you of one that did, whoſe Extraordinary *Wiſdom* makes his Judgment very *Regardable*. It is the great *Daniel*; *Chap.* 6. 10. who *Prayed in his Houſe*; and with his *Houſhold*, (it is to be ſuppoſed;) Becauſe the *Informers* came and found him at it. *Ver.* 7. And it was at ſuch a Time; when thoſe Prayers were *Prohibited*, even upon pain of *Death*. And yet he thought it more Needful to Perſiſt in Calling upon the Name of his *God*; Than to ſhift for the Preſervation of his *Life*. And if you would not *Arrogate* a Wiſdom above his; and be thought to underſtand yourſelves, and the Will of the Lord, better than he; that was ſo well acquainted with the *Secrets of God*: Look not then upon theſe Prayers, as a *By-Buſineſs*; which you may Perform, or you may Let alone, as you *Pleaſe*: But fall about the Work, and keep to it, as that which is *Meet, Right, and your Boundrn Duty to do.*

Should any now tell me, This is one *Doctor's* Opinion: and *Many Men, Many Minds.* I ſee, and Grieve, That among the Multitudes of Families, all Profeſſing one and the ſame *Faith*, There is yet ſuch

ſuch different *Conduct*; That ſome of them Carry, as if they were quite of another *Religion*; and ſome, as if they were of *none* at all. Some much *Given* to Prayer: Some doing very little at it; and ſome clean off it, doing even juſt *Nothing*. As if their Houſes were *Priviledg'd* from the Service; Or they had found ſome *Back-way* to Life, by themſelves; without *Striving to Enter any Strait Gate*. Unhappy *Libertines*! That have got *Rope* enough, to do their own *Buſineſs*. O *Curſed* Priviledge! To enjoy an Open *Latitude*, to Run upon the Damnation of Hell; and nothing to *Hinder* them. And *dreadful* Liberty! To keep off from the God of their Life; and not to *Call* upon the Lord, that they might be *Saved*. Therefore,

2. I would make you *Senſible*, That it is not only *Needful*, but *Good* for you, thus to Draw Nigh to God. That you may not think, I am going to offer a *Trouble*, but a *Kindneſs* to your Houſes; and would not lay a *Burden*, but bring down a *Bleſſing* upon them. It is a Singular *Privilege*, and *Favour*, from the Lord, That you may go thus in a *Body*, (when you will,) to him; and find *Welcome* and kind Acceptance with him. Nothing makes more for your true *Intereſt*, and happy Advantage every way. And to Reaſon with you, as our *Lord* did with the *Samaritan* Woman, *John* 4. 10. *If you knew the Gift of God*, and who it is that Calls you to him, and gives you not only *Leave*, but *Encouragement*, to ſpeak your Mind *Freely* before him; You would not be ſo *Slow* to Seek; Nor Need to be *Driven* into his Preſence; But Glad with all your Souls, to Open your Wants to him; and to Ask all that you Need from him. If you knew what made moſt for the *Eſtabliſhment* and *Proſperity* of your Families, Inſtead of *Diſputing* the matter,

and

and making a *Controverſy* of your *Duty*; You would Fly and Flock to your Prayers, as *Eagles* to their deareſt Entertainment. When nothing in the World ſo much tends to Promote the *Safety*, the *Profit*, the *Credit*, and the *Comfort* of your ſeveral Houſes.

1. The *Safety*; To Preſerve and Secure your Houſes, from the worſt of all *Plagues*; The Infection of *Reigning* Wickedneſs: and from the moſt dreadful of all *Fires*, the Burning *Indignation of the Lord of Hoſts*. A man's *Houſe* is counted his *Caſtle*; where he may ſit Safe from Aſſaults and Dangers. I am ſure, it will make your Houſes more *Impregnable*, and much better *Gariſons*, for your Defence and Preſervation; If by your Prayers and Devotions, you will *Engage* the great Almighty *Keeper* of *Iſrael*, to come to you, and *Dwell* among you, and be *For* you. For 'tis *He only that makes you dwell in Safety*, *Pſalm* 3. laſt verſe. And *he that dwells in the Secret place of the moſt High ſhall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty*, *Pſalm* 91. 1. Yea *becauſe thou haſt made the Lord, who is my Refuge, even the moſt High, thy Habitation; There ſhall no Evil befal thee; Neither ſhall any Plague come nigh thy Dwelling*, Verſe 9, 10. O then *Fortify* yourſelves in your Houſes, with theſe ſtrongeſt *Batteries* of your Prayers. As *Daniel*, upon the Plots and Cruelties of his combined, bitter *Enemies*; betook himſelf to his *Knees*, inſtead of his *Arms*; and would not ſtand to *Struggle* and Fight it out with them; But fell to *Wreſtle* and Strive with his *God* That he might Engage an *Intereſt*, to *Countermine* the Malice; and make a *Friend* on his ſide, that ſhould be too hard for them all. And *David* took the ſame wiſe Courſe. *Pſal* 109. 4. *For my Love they*

are

are my Adverſaries; but I give my ſelf to Prayer. And *Pſal.* 55. 16. After his Complaint of ſpightful *Foes*, and falſe *Friends*, *As for me*, (ſaith he,) *I will Call upon God, and the Lord ſhall Save me.* So when *Peſtered* with Troubleſome Neighbours about you; and Threatned with Enemies to *Invade* you; and eſpecially when Endanger'd by the *Roaring Lion*, ſtill upon his Circuit, *Seeking to Devour you*: O run to this Shelter, and here take *Sanctuary*: So ſhall you be ſure to *Eſcape*; and all the *Peril* ſhall fly beſide you: Or as much as Lights upon you, ſhall never *Undo* you. When your *Lintels* and *Side-Poſts* are ſo Sprinkled with the *Blood* of your Sacrifices; The *Deſtroying Angel* will paſs over you. And though a Common *Deſtruction* ſeems to make no *Diſtinction*; yet in the very *Deſtruction* you ſhall find *Salvation*. For *whoſoever ſhall Call on the Name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved. Rom.* 10. 13. 'Tis not *Stones* and *Timber* can Secure you: For *Diſeaſes* and *Death* even there can break in, and get at you. But *Faith* and *Prayer* builds your Houſe upon the *Rock*, that will never Fail you. Where nothing ſhall Hurt you: and even *Harms* themſelves ſhall do you no *Harm*.

2. This Courſe of Family-Prayer is a moſt *Thriving* Courſe, to Enrich your Houſes. Not only to keep all your People *Faithful*, in their ſeveral Offices; But to *Proſper* your Deſigns and Labours: To fetch down that *Bleſſing* of the Lord, which maketh *Rich*: And (if he ſee it *Good* for you,) to increaſe the *World*'s Good upon you. For *Godlineſs*, which is call'd *Profitable to all things*; *has the Promiſe even of the Life that now is*, as well as of *that to come.* 1 Tim. 4 8. And he that teaches us to Ask our *Daily Bread*, does not bid us *Seek his Face in vain.* But all things are like

like to Succeed the better to you, when you take him along with you; who can ſo eaſy *Blaſt* the Greateſt, and *Bleſs* the Smalleſt, Hopes, whenever he pleaſes. So that you may Speed better by a few *Minutes* hearty Prayer, than by a whole *Day*'s tugging Labour. And this *Begging* Trade is the moſt *Gainful* Trade. For though you be ſtill *Beggars*; you can never be *Poor*, as long as your Lord is *Rich*: Not only Rich in himſelf, but *To all that Call upon him* Rom. 10. 12. And this *Joint* Begging looks ſtill the more *Hopeful* for Speeding; Becauſe it gets more *Hands* ſubſcribed to the *Petition*; and many *Strings* Twiſted together, to make the *Cord*, that is to draw down the Precious Goods, the Stronger.

And however you Fare for this *World*, Thus you ſhall be ſure to get *Rich towards God*. Luk. 12. 21. Rich in Faith, and Grace, and Good Works: Which is the true *Treaſure*, and the Greateſt *Wealth*. For our Bleſſed Saviour has taught us, That a Man may get the *whole* World, and be never the better, but *Undone* for ever. But he that Wins *Chriſt*, and has the Bleſſed *God* himſelf for his *Portion*, is ſet up for a truly *Rich* and *Happy* man; and may Scorn all the Reſt, as Droſs and Dung. Nor is this only an Eſtate of *Fancy*'s Raiſing, and the Dreaming of *Golden Mountains*. The Worldlings Subſtance, indeed, is ſuch a *Shadow*, a *Cheat*, a *Nullity*. Prov. 23. 5. *He ſets his eyes upon that which is Not*: That which he ſhall experience to be Nothing; *Nothing* to Help him; when he ſhall have the moſt *Occaſion* for its Help.

For that will be found *Real Gains*, at the Foot of the Account; which will do a man Good at the *Laſt*, and Stick to him, and Stay by him, as Long as ever he can *Need* it. And what is that, but the Never-failing *Treaſure in the Heavens*; and our

and our Interest in it, Our Title to it, and what we have to shew for it? Now Prayer is the *Key* to *Unlock* all these Treasures; For it is but *Ask and Have.* Surely, The most *Compendious* Art of Thriving; The quickest and Easiest way to be *Rich*: To get all, and Cost you nothing: Never a *Penny*; Nor any *Turning and Winding*; unless it be of your Prayers. And by this Means, how many have got a mighty *Stock* already? and have a great deal to shew for it; in all the Graces and Good things of God's Spirit; more worth than Jewels, Rubies, Pearls, and Diamonds; Wherewith they Abound and Overflow, to *Edify* the Church, and *Enrich* this poor Sinful World? What they have so *Won* with their *Prayers*, they *Wear* in their *Lives.*

But as for such Exorbitant *Spendthrifts*, that Defeat the *Discipline*, and for all the *Prayers*, make Shift still to Continue in all their *Sins*: When this does no Good of them, I know not what will. And then if any that use *Good Prayers*, be *Bad Livers*; The Fault lies all in the *Persons*; and not in the *Prayers*: Nor is it Imputable to the *Thing*; but to their *Ill* doing it; and making a mere *Formality* of it. And then they must Answer for the *Abuse*; and not the Prayers be charg'd with the *Bad Success.* Or if some of the Family-Members, that were Held in, and *Hal'd* to that, which they never *Loved*, do after Scandalously fly out, and take the Liberty to shew what they were: They shame *themselves*, and not the *Holy Offices*; and only Convince us, That the *Best Means* are Lost upon some *Ill men*; Who from the *Eminent* Height, to which they were Advanced, can take the Advantage to Break their *Necks*: Or *Murder* themselves, in the very *Ship*, that is carrying them over to the *Blessed* Land. But our

Lord's

Lord's Family muſt not bear the Blame of the *Traytor's Villany*: For it was not becauſe the Maſter kept *Strict Orders*: But becauſe the Servant was a Wretch of *Incorrigible Manners*.

This Way of Prayer, is God's own *Appointed* Means; abundantly to Benefit Souls. For this, there is an *Aptitude* in it: And all that are Conſcientious in the uſe of it, ſhall find ſuch a Bleſſing going along with it. As the Lord Bleſſed *Obed-Edom, and all his Houſhold*; when the *Ark*, (that *Symbol* of his Preſence,) *was there*: 2 *Sam* 6. 11. So ſhall the Houſes be *Bleſſed*, where Prayer Dwelling, Calls in, and Prevails with the *Bleſſed God*, to Dwell there too.

And thus you may *Increaſe* in Riches; If you will not be *Niggards* in the Expence of your Prayers. And as you all uſe to be at it, *Labouring* together to Improve your *Eſtates*; So all be at it, *Praying* together, to Augment your Spiritual *Wealth*. And never fear, that it will *Hinder* your Buſineſs, or Deſtroy your *Gains*; to Stay for *Prayers*: Nor be ſo *Haſty* to be Rich, that you will not *Tarry* to Pray. For what this *Stops* you one way, it will make you Amends, the *Hundredfold*, another way. But never ſhall that *Good* be for *your Good*; that is not *Sanctified to you, by the Word of God and Prayer*. Though ſo you may *Tear*, and *Snatch*, and get it: Yet better you had been without it; When it ſhall Abide by you, only to be a *Curſe* to you; and to Riſe up in the *Judgment* againſt you.

O ſee here how you may be beſt Provided, of all that ſhall be *Good for you*; and ſuch *Good* as ſhall never be *taken from you*. Ye know, how men uſe to follow and Court the *Great Ones*, that can Advance them and their Intereſts; And how they will Deſpiſe thoſe, that have no ſuch *Friends*; and

and Cenſure the Folly of ſuch as will not make *Uſe* of them: when they have 'em. O may you Learn this Wiſdom of the *World's Children*, To Frequent his *Gates*, who, (before all Friends in the World,) is *able to do Exceeding abundantly for you, even Above all that you Aſk or Think*: That you may not *Starve*, in the midſt of all the *Fulneſs*; Nor let it be ſaid of you, *Ye have not, Becauſe ye Aſk not*.

3. This Family-Prayer will be moſt for the *Credit* of you and your Houſes. God will *Provide* for your Honour; when you take ſuch *Care* of his. And you ſhall be Eſteemed then, as a People *Near* and *Dear* to Him, and *Great* and *Intimate* with Him. Nor can it ſo much lay you open to the Exceptions and Laſhes of ſome Prophane *Scoffers*: But it will a great deal more Raiſe your Value, with all their *Betters*. Yea the Regularity and Piety of a Sober Religious Family, has a *Beauty*, that takes with many, who yet will not be at the Trouble, to *Promote* it in their own. In Former days, it was thought no Diſparagement for a great *Officer*, to Give himſelf to *Prayer*: Nor was his Devotion counted Scandalous, but Glorious. For *Cornelius the Centurion, a Devout man, and one that Feared God, with all his Houſe*, *Acts* 10. 2. and that *Prayed in his Houſe*; *ver.* 30. (Or in his Family; for ſo the word Οἶκος is uſed, *Heb.* 11. 7.) and did there Officiate Himſelf: Is ſaid to be a man of *Good Report, among all the Nation of the Jews*, *ver.* 22. And as *Degenerate* as ever the World is grown, Sure it ſounds more *Laudable* ſtill, for a *Houſe* to be called, An *Orderly*, *Praying* Houſe; than a *Wild Drinking* Houſe: And no *Laſſening* Character of any *Maſter*, To be more for *God* and for *Prayer*; than for the *World*, and for his own vain *Pleaſure*.

The

The Gallantry and Bravery, The Furniture and Hoſpitality, I know, are the main things Admired and Cryed up by the *Epicurean* Tribe. But Wiſer and Better *Judges*; do ſee the *Nakedneſs* of the Houſe through all theſe: And that One thing ſtill, and that the *Main* thing of all, is *Wanting*; Where the Care of the *Soul* is Forgotten; and the *Lord* of all has not ſo much Reſpect among them, as would be ſhewed but to any Conſiderable *Man*, that comes to Viſit them. He that has more to do there than they all, ſhall not be *Regarded* at all. But it may be written over the Door, *God is not in this Place*. His Religion here has no Room; Nor his *Name*, unleſs it be in the Swearers or Scorners *mouth*. And thus the Maſter Loſes himſelf with all the *beſt* of his Friends: and more would *drop* their good Opinion of him, if they came better to know him.

Though a *Looſe* Family may call him a Good Maſter, who does not uſe to Call them to *Prayers*: Yet what is he *Good* for; that Provides no Better for them, than if he were an *Infidel*? When they ſhall every day be Concern'd with one another in all Buſineſs elſe; But no more Correſpond in any *Joynt Worſhip* of God, Than if each of them were to the other *a Heathen man or a Publican*. If St. *Paul* calls him *worſe than an Infidel*, *that Provides not for his own Houſe*, on the *Worldly* Account; I know not what better to Eſteem him, that will not Provide for them, on the *Religious* Account. When it looks Probable, (by the *Lares* and *Penates*, their Houſhold-Gods,) That the very *Heathens* did offer up ſomewhat like Divine *Worſhip* in their *Families*. How can we then *Think* without a Reflection of *Infamy*, upon any, who Name the Name of *Chriſt*; with whom their Lord ſtands even for *Nothing*; and they have other matters to mind, than ever to think of his *Worſhip*? O what

O what a Houſe is here kept! *A Heathenish Houſe*, The Famed Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, calls them. (Part 5. Sect. 11.) *Are they a Family of Chriſtians, where the Worſhip of God, by Daily Prayers, Morning and Evening is Neglected?* The late *Archbiſhop* (whoſe Memory is ſo deſervedly Honoured,) ſays, (*Serm. of Fam. Rel.*) *He ſees not how in Reaſon they can be ſo eſteemed; Or indeed to have any Religion.* Which they have not ſo much as the *Face* of. They are more like a Fortreſs of *Rebels*: Or a Neſt of *Serpents*; Spitting Contempt and Defiance at their Maker and Preſerver. And thy Houſe then is no other than the Seat of an *Uſurper*: And thou there aſſumeſt the Glory of God to thy ſelf; where thou muſt be ſo *Uppermoſt*; that even *He* ſhall not be Owned *Above* thee. And then who (doſt thou think) muſt Honour thee, when thou canſt treat the moſt High with ſuch Contempt? Never do thou imagine to keep up thy Authority, by Denying his. For that Arrogance, which makes thee ſo *Topping*, to ſet up thy ſelf above thy *Sovereign*: It does but *Uncover* thy Nakedneſs, inſtead of *Cloathing* thee with Majeſty and Honour: It makes thee the more Baſe and *Deſpicable* to all the Faithful *Subjects* of Heaven. And if thou doſt not ſooner take *Shame* to thy ſelf; He that is *Jealous* of his Glory, will one day bring it upon thee, before all the *World*.

Thou Conſulteſt *Shame* to thy Houſe; in keeping off that Serious *Religion*, which would be the *Glory* of thy Family. And till thou doſt more wiſely bethink thy ſelf, and ſet up better *Orders* among thy *Retinue*; Thou art Vile and *Scandalous* thy ſelf; and helpeſt to Spoil their *Credit*, together with thy *Own*. And you all then Live together, like a *Lawleſs Rout*; that *Forget* your ſelves

and *Miſtake* your Buſineſs in the World; and are going the way to be *Caſt* out from God for ever in the *next* World; Becauſe you ſo Live without him in *this*. And you have no way to *Recover* your Reputation here, and to Prevent your Everlaſting Confuſion hereafter; but by *Humbling* your ſelves before him, from whom you have ſo Departed; and Returning to your *Allegiance*, and giving up your ſelves to his Service, and ſetting about his Buſineſs; Even that *Worſhip* of the Great God, which is the Glorious Employment of *Saints* and *Angels* in Heaven; and which Honours the Higheſt *Kings* and *Princes* of the Earth, more than all their Crowns and *Regalia*, and the Plaudits and Cringings of their Subjects: Yea, which will Raiſe even the Pooreſt of you all, to the Dignity of an *Equality* with them in his Sight; and to be *Favourites* of Heaven, and the Beloved of the Lord. For ſo *Daniel* was called, *Chap.* 9. 23. *Greatly Beloved*. Not ſo much for his Excellent *Parts*, or his Eminent *Station*; as for his ſingular *Piety*, and Flaming *Devotion*. How Proud are men of the Service, to attend upon their Prince; and not only to wait in his *Preſence*, but to be happy in the Enjoyment of his *Favour*? And what Bigger Title has the Higheſt Prince in the World, than to be a *Servant of the moſt High God*? And yet to Serve his *Chriſt*, will make you ſuch as the King of *Heaven* will think fit to *Honour*. So ſaith our Lord, *Joh.* 12. 26. *If any man Serve me, him will my Father Honour*. Any man, even the *Meaneſt* man, is Capable of this Higheſt *Preferment*. And, for my part, as I cannot but Deſpiſe and Abhor the Habitations of the *Prophane*, tho never ſo Fine and Splendid, Pompous, and richly Furniſh'd: For there they are *Strangers* to God, and *Out* with Heaven: And while their *Hallies are*

fill'd

fill'd with the Hid Treasure, Leanness is sent into their Souls: and amidst all the *Plenty*, still *they are Beggarly*, because they will not *Beg*. So I Reverence the *Praying Families*; though never so Poor and Low in the World: For *God* is with them; and the most *High* has a Gracious *Respect* unto them. And such Servants of His, you all may be, and ought to be. Yea thus you may be *Royal Favourites*; and Rise to be *Great in the Kingdom of Heaven*. Not by Carrying it High, like the Proud *Pharaoh*, that ask'd, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his Voice?* No, But by Honouring him with the Profoundest Adoration your selves; and also seeing that your Families all do the Like: Calling upon them, as his Renowned Servant has taught you; Psal. 34. 3. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together.* And in thus Exalting Him, you will also Exalt *your selves*. For you can never indeed so Exalt him, as to make him *Higher* than he is: All that you can do, is but to give him what is *Due* to him; and so to raise him in your own Souls, and in others apprehensions. Yet when you do but thus much, he will exalt you *Really*; and raise you even above *your selves*, to an Equality with his Blessed *Angels*.

4. This Family-Worship will make for the *Comfort* of your Houses: To render them Sweet and Peaceable Habitations; amiable as the *Tabernacles of the Lord*; lightsome as the *Gates of Heaven*; and filled with the voice of Joy and Salvation; as the *Presence Chambers* of the God of *Consolation*. There's no such *House* kept, as where *God* is pleas'd to *Dwell*. And he Dwells in every House, where the Inhabitants set themselves to *Seek* his Face; and meet together to *Call* upon his Name. And then the very *Heart of them may Rejoice, that Seek the Lord*, Psal. 105. 3. 'Tis not

a *Doleful* Service therefore, but a *Heavenly* Entertainment. 'Tis not only pleaſant and comely to *Praiſe the Lord*; to recount the Richeſt Favours, and to diſcharge your *Debts* in making grateful Acknowledgments: (For that is all the *Pay* Heaven expects from poor Creatures:) But even *Confeſſion* eaſes the *Heavy* Heart; and *Supplication* gives the Mind full *Vent*, and pours out all the Grievances of the Soul; and then it *Returns to its Reſt*.

O do not then look upon Prayers as your *Drudgery*, but the ſweeteſt *Feſtivity*: and go to God as to the Deareſt Friend, and your *Exceeding Joy*. Though Prayer has its *Sighs and Groans*, yet theſe are but as the *Baſs* to the Muſick: and ſtill it is the *Joyful Sound*: Pleaſing to the Lord, and no leſs ſo to all experienced Souls, that *delight* in approaching to their God. They are to ſerve him with *Gladneſs*, and come before his Preſence with *Singing*, Pſal. 100. 2. And he promiſes to make them not only *Welcome* but *Joyful, in his Houſe of Prayer*, Iſa. 56. 7. So does he uſe them; and ſo do they uſe to find it, above all that they are able to expreſs it.

And therefore ſuffer not the malicious *Tempter* ever to put you out of conceit with *Prayer*: To make that paſs for your *Task* and *Torment*, which the Gracious God has provided as the poor Souls *Song* and *Hearts-Eaſe* in the Houſe of its Pilgrimage; and for a reviving *Cordial* in every time of Trouble. And if your Sins and ſtrangeneſs to God make it *uneaſy* to any of your Souls; 'tis not becauſe Prayer is *harſh*, and void of Comfort, but becauſe your Souls are diſeaſed and out of *Tune*. And then inſtead of taking Diſtaſte at the *Prayers*, your buſineſs is to get thoſe Souls in better *Temper*; and pray on, till you have conquer'd the Difficulty,

Difficulty, and pray'd down the *Sins* that deſtroy the *Comforts*. For be ſure the Pleaſure is to be *Found*, it is before you; and therefore *preſs* on ſtill after it, till you reach into the *Poſſeſſion* of it.

And as they that have received Grace from the Lord, long to *propagate* the ſame to others; ſo whoever has taſted the *Sweetneſs* of Prayer in *ſecret*, will deſire that all his Friends may *partake* with him in it; that the *Harmony* may increaſe with the *Conſort*: And then 'tis, O *come let us ſing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noiſe to the Rock of our Salvation*, Pſal. 95. 1. And this is your ſweet and comfortable living together, when you are for *inviting* one another to join in the Praiſes of your Maker and Redeemer; and to ſeek all your Happineſs in his unmeaſurable *Fulneſs*, who has enough to ſupply and pleaſure you *All*; and will have never the leſs ſtill in himſelf, how much ſoever he beſtows upon you. O where can you ever be *Better* than with him? Where ſo *Well*? When to be in his *Preſence* is to be where is *Fulneſs* of Joy.

But ſeparated from him, and out of this *way* of your Duty, O what ſhall you find but Vanity and Vexation, *Fatigue* and Diſappointment? Now and then, (it may be) the *Fair Face* of Satisfaction; but ſtill at the botrom, the bitter *Root* of Sorrow. You may be cheated with *Expectation* of Joy in a hundred Adventures and Expedients, while you are drawing one another from *God*: But in drawing *nigh* to him, you draw up to the *Fountain-Head* of Joy compleat, and Pleaſure everlaſting. As long as you live in the wilful *Neglect* of theſe Holy Duties, you are quite out of your *Places*, and may deſpair there ever to find *Reſt to your Souls*. For *Conſcience* (if alive at all) will never let you be *eaſy*, but Taunt and Haraſs you,

:nd give you many a *Twitch* and *Pang*, to ſpoil the Sport of your ſinful Pleaſures; and make your *Hearts* ſad, even in the midſt of the *Laughter*. So that I ſhall never grudge unto looſe Families, all the Joy of their wild Liberties; nor count them in better caſe, than thoſe whoſe *Confinement* to the Pious Offices ſeems to *Debar* them of all the Sweets of a Merry Life. For I know that the Liberty of the one is only a *Latitude* to Miſchief, and undo themſelves. And the Confinement of the other, is only a *Walling* them up in a fair *Walk* of Decency and Duty, ſo to Conduct them to the Bleſſed *End* in all Felicity and Glory. O curſed *Freedom!* to Rove up and down the *Broad Way* after ſuch a Leader, as has no Deſign in all the large *Allowance* by the way, but to throw them upon an intolerable *Damnation* at the End! And O happy *Confinement*, under an *Eaſy* Yoke, and *Precious* Burthen! In waiting upon the *Beſt* of Maſters, that ſets you not on work to ſerve any *Ends* upon you; but only *Employs* you, that he may *Glorify* you, and keeps you under his *Diſcipline*, to Train you up for his *Kingdom*. His Service gives you *Hearts-Eaſe* on the Way, and *Heaven* at the End. It creates a Bleſſed Peace *within you*, and ſets Eternal Glory *before you*.

So full of Heavenly Satisfaction and *Pleaſure*, is the Life that is led with *God*, in this holy Way. And the *Religious Houſe*, which looks, in the Carnal Eye, ſo Melancholy, and even as a *Gool*; The Praying Family, upon which Profane Creatures look ſo *Inſulting* and Scornfully: Such is the Sweet *Retreat*, the Happy *Sanctuary*; where *Princes* and *Nobles* have out-run the Glories of a *Throne*, and Stole away from the Pleaſures of a *Court*; to Hide and Solace themſelves: After they have come to Learn a *Wiſdom*, better than the

World

World can Teach; and to Taſt that Pleaſure *Within*, dropt down from Above; which makes them Pity the *mean* Souls, that are Smelling and *Hunting* for Pleaſure only along the *Ground*.

I know, ſome Maſters and Families are for *Forcing* a Pleaſure, quite another way, than what I am deſcribing: And think to *Enſure* it, and to take their Fill of it; in Drinking and Ranting, Singing and Gaming, Jeſting and Fooling, Feaſting and Jolly doing. They will have it; Not only without God's *Leave*; But as it were, in *Spight* of his Word; quite againſt all that he has ſaid. And then the *Bible* muſt lie Cloſe in a Corner of the Houſe; Leſt, if Opened, it fly in their *Faces*; and Shame and Ruin the whole *Scene* of their *Gayety*. And *Prayers*, indeed, have no Agreement with ſuch *Tempers*: No, They Deſpiſe the poor *Sneaks*, and Melancholly *Fools*; that muſt needs be under God's *Rules*; and taken up ſo much in his Preſence. They have no *Joy*, but in *Forgetting* him, and upon the *Ramble* from him. And therefore they ſeem ſo *Comfortable*, only becauſe they are ſo *Unconſcionable*; To *Rob* God of his Rights, and *Regale* themſelves, with their *Stolen* Meats. Their *Pleaſantneſs* is the rotten Fruit of their *Forgetfulneſs*: And all their *Gladneſs* of Heart, ariſes from the *Hardneſs* of their Hearts. And O how Mad is that *Mirth*, which is had with God's *Wrath!* How can you *Laugh*, when He *Frowns*? And while the *Meat is in your Mouths*, the Wrath of God is ready to *Light on your Heads*! Unleſs you could *Die*, as well as *Live*, like Brutes; The Dying and After-Reckoning, that will ſtill Damp and Mortify all the Rejoycing. Small cauſe then to be ſo Jocund upon *Earth*; when you are got in ſuch a Caſe, as to be even Ripe and Ready for *Hell*: And all the

Frolicking, and Wantonneſs, and Pleaſure of this kind of Life, ſeems but an ugly *Preface* to the Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnaſhing of *Teeth*.

O Sirs! This is not the Way. 'Tis all but *Froth*, and nothing of *Subſtance*. It will never do, to give you Peace *within*; any more than to bring you Peace at the *laſt*; To make you Eaſy at the Bottom, and heartily Joyful. No, you ſhall never know true Comfort in your *Life*, Till you turn o're a new *Leaf*; Till you Live to another *End*; and walk more *Humbly* with your God: Till you are upon better *Terms* with Him; and keep a fairer *Correſpondence* above; and accuſtom yourſelves to the Exerciſes, that look Hopeful, to fit you up for your higheſt Advancement. When your Families look like ſo many little *Colonies* and *Nurſeries*, meet to be Tranſplanted into the *Paradiſe* of God: Then you may Rejoyce indeed, that your *Names are Written in Heaven*. And when your *Vallies* are covered over with ſuch bleſſed *Fruits*, they may *Shout for Joy, and alſo Sing*. So ſweet is it to Live with God in this way of Duty: That will make you to look with Comfort even upon *Death*, and *Deſire to be Diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt*. And then you may afford to go *Rejoycing* all the Days of your Life; and fear nothing to Deſtroy the *Comforts* that grow upon ſuch a *Reſt*.

Thus much I have to ſay for the *Family-Prayer*. And now let us hear, what any has to ſay againſt it. 'Tis wonder if it be not *contradicted:* Wonder if the great Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World has no *Advocates* in it, to Plead his Cauſe; which, by this means, ſeems in danger to be ſo much *Damnified*. Some Objections I have *Heard*. And ſome I do ſuſpect, that I not expect to *Hear*.

For

For there are *Colourable* Excuſes for the neglect; that uſe to be *alledged:* And there are *Real* Cauſes of it, that lie *Concealed:* As not thought fit to be *mentioned.* I ſhall take Notice of both. And of the former ſort are, The want of a *Command*, The want of *Time*, The want of *Ability*, The want of *Company*, for it: And the want of *Succeſs* in it.

1. Some except againſt this Family-Prayer, for want of a *Command.* They complain, That it is the making of *Duties* without any *Commands:* And cry out of the Impoſing and *Prieſt-Riding*; To bring a Free People under *Slavery*; and *Tye* them up, where God has left them at *Liberty.* Now this is a heavy Charge; could it be made out. And I know from what *Quarter* this Wind uſes to blow. But 'tis well, that it is but *Wind*; and that there is ſo little *Reaſon* for it. I am not upon a *Diſputation*, but an *Exhortation:* And therefore ſhall not pretend to an ample *Demonſtration.* But beſides, That I have already prevented my ſelf, for proving the propoſed Duty, to be a needful Duty: I believe, that the Objectors *Cavils* are not Reaſons that ſatisfy even *themſelves:* But they go conſcious that their neglect is more for want of *Mind* to it, than of a *Command* for it. When if there were no *Expreſs* Charge in Particular; yet it is ſo evident, That the whole Driſt of God's Holy Word, is to ſet us about our Heavenly Father's *Buſineſs*, and to engage us to follow it with all our *Might*, all our *Days*, in all our *Stations* and *Relations.* And to look upon all the little *Time* we have here, but as a *preparing* Time for the Place and State, where we muſt *abide* for ever. And ſtill to carry ourſelves in this Vale of *Mortality*, as the *Candidates* and Seekers of a better *Country*, in everlaſting Glory.

'Tis not only the *Letter* of Scripture, and what is expreſly ſaid in it, but alſo the *Deductions* of Scripture, and what may naturally be drawn from it, that we are to look upon as *Scripture*, and our *Rule* to go by. We muſt be determined by, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, though not ſaid in *Terminis*, when it is by plain and eaſy *Conſequence*. Elſe we might not only turn *Baptiſm* out of the *Church*, but the *Lord's-Day* out of the *World*, as well as *Prayer* out of the *Houſe*.

But beſides the Command to Pray *every where*, that is fit for the purpoſe, as you muſt all own your Houſes to be, unleſs you will condemn yourſelves as unfit to *Live* in them; if you make them *unfit* for it: And the Command to *continue in Prayer*, *Col.* 4. 2. which was given particularly to *Maſters* of Families: And the Duty which our Lord has taught us in his *Prayer*, to do the Will of God *on Earth*, *as it is in Heaven*; which, be ſure, is with the joint, *unanimous* Adoration of all that *Glorious* Family: God has ſaid enough in his Word, to *Determine* the Practice of all his *Devout* Servants, and *Dear* Lovers: Though not to ſatisfy the perverſe and *diſaffected* Ill-Willers, who uſe to ſhew the *Mettle* that they ſhould ſpend in the *Service*, to *Argue* themſelves out of it, and to Condemn the whole Generation of his Children, in all Ages and Places of the World, for a Company of *Miſtaken* Zealots; to accuſtom themſelves ſtill (as they have done) to this Family-Worſhip. When, indeed, the general conſtant *Uſage* of theſe, may go for one of the moſt *Authentick* Comments upon God's Revealed Pleaſure, in all ſuch common *Practical* Caſes. And the uſual Oppoſers of this Service, are too well known to be none of the likelieſt Perſons, to be beſt *Acquainted* with the Will of God.

God. Nor are they so *Tender*, to consult the *Divine* Pleasure, in any thing that makes for their own *Pleasure*. And what suits with their *Humour*, they do not call for a *Text* to prove it. No, they can often force their way through a *Hundred* Texts that Condemn it. But what they have no *Kindness* for, they are not willing to believe themselves *Bound* to. If it go against the *Stomach*, they are forward to Fancy it may as well be *let alone*. In that which is to be done for *God*, they *Dispute* the Obligation: And they'll put him to make a *Distress* upon them, to get his *Rights* of them. He must go to *Law* with them; but they shall find *good Law* in abundance against them; for that *Ungodliness*, which is the Grand *Bar* to their Prayers.

Should an Earthly Prince but give them as much *Intimation* of his Mind, that they should be *Welcome* with him, coming as oft as they would for Riches and Honour: A *Hint* should serve the turn: And how soon would they *Spell* out the meaning? And not hang long in *Suspence*, whether they were *bound* to go or not? And if the *King of Heaven* has given sufficient *Indication* of his Mind, that the Morning and Evening Sacrifice of the *Family*, are such a *Sacrifice* wherewith he is well *pleased*: What if he would not speak out more particularly, that he might trust *Love*, and leave somewhat to the Conduct of that *Spirit*, which is to Lead his People into all *Truth*? And to try the Choice of Heavenly *Wisdom*; whether we will not understand ourselves better, than to *Wrangle* away the Holy Work, which is so much our Blessed *Privilege*? You may rest assured then, that here you do *well*, and take the *safest* part: And that when your Lord comes, you shall never be *Blamed*, but *Blessed*, to be found so doing.

2. Some

2 Some plead want of *Time*, to Excuſe them from the Work. They have (all of them) their Hands ſo full, ſo much lying upon them; ſuch a *Hurry* of Buſineſs, ſuch *Multiplicity* of Affairs, this and the other to be done; they know not which firſt. Between the Care of their *Families*, the Burdens of their *Places*, the Ailments of their *Bodies*, and the Croſſes and Troubles of the *World*, that they cannot have time to *Attend* theſe Family-Prayers. They are too much *call'd* upon themſelves, to lie *Calling* upon the Lord. They would do it, but they have no Room for it. And ſo they put off their *Monitors*, and ſeem to *Content* themſelves, that they cannot Help it, and it's none of their Fault. And 'tis well in the mean time, if they be not more *pleas'd* than *griev'd* with the Hindrance.

Now, though it's true, ſome have much *more*, and *better* Leiſure than others; and ſo more may be expected from them: And the heavier *Reckoning* remains for them, if they throw away thoſe precious *Opportunities* upon their *Impertinencies*, or in the *Devil's* Service, which God gave them, wherein to *Glorify* him, and to work out their *Salvation*. And ſuch as are *Involved* in more Buſineſs and Cumber, I ſhall leave to Examine themſelves, Whether they do *Groan* under the Burden of their *Apoſtacy*; that they muſt *Eat their Bread in the Sweat of their Faces?* And do not rather *Rejoyce*, that they have got an *Evaſion*, to Priviledge them from being any more concerned in the immediate *Attendance* upon their God.

Yet which of you all can pretend, You have *no* Time for doing that, which God gave you *all* your time in the World to do? Or do you think it will bring you off at the Laſt, for neglecting the

the *One* thing needful, that you were ſo cumber'd with many things elſe? When compar'd with *that*, Alas, What are your many things, but as ſo many *Rattles*, which the Children ſtand ſhaking; or the *Dirt-pies* that they make; or any ſuch pitiful *Trifles*, wherewith they *Amuſe* themſelves? Unworthy ever to be *Named* as any *Apology*, why the Great Lord of all ſhould not be duly *Attended*, and his Worſhip and Service conſtantly performed.

Whatever Buſineſs elſe you have, be ſure ſtill, Your greateſt Buſineſs of all is with *Him*: And all the reſt will come to nothing *without him*: And you will be never the better for any thing that ever you do, if all your Works are not *Begun*, *Continued*, and *Ended* in Him. If you cannot find time to do the Work of God, you'll one day *Curſe* the Buſineſs that took you *off*; and find, after all the Buſtle, you had as good all your Day to have ſtood *Idle*, as ſo to *fill* it up, there was no *Room* left for *Prayer*. You ſay *this* muſt be done, and *that* muſt be done. But our Lord has taught you to ſay, I *muſt* work the Works of him that *ſent* me; and that muſt not be left *undone*. If one or the other muſt needs be *omitted*, the Wiſe and Faithful Servant of God will quickly determine which ſhall *Truckle* and give Place: And rather borrow from his *Meals*, or his *Pillow*, than He ſhall have none of his *Time*, who gives it *All*; yea, and renounce that *Calling*, wherein he cannot *Abide with God*; and rather venture himſelf to be *turned* out of Doors; than graſp ſo much Buſineſs, as to *Juſtle* Prayers out of Doors.

But *Poverty* and *Troubles* look very ill *Excuſes* to ſhift off *Prayers*; when indeed they are more in Seaſon than ever. For, *Is any afflicted, let him Pray.*

Pray, *James* 5. 13. *And Call upon me in the Day of Trouble*, *Pſal.* 50. 15. As then you have the moſt *Need* of Help; ſo then you have the *Thorns* in your Sides, to *Prick* you on the more to look after it. And in ſuch Times and Caſes, you are never the worſe provided with *Sufficiency* for this Work, which requires not *Bodily* Strength, nor any *Money* to Raiſe this Stock. And you might be thought as Craſy in your *Minds*, as in your *Bodies*, if you ſhould think fit to let alone your Prayers, till ſuch time as you had nothing to *Trouble* you; and no leſs Idle, to put it off, till you had nothing elſe to do. For all would pretend *ſome* things, and ſome would *Enumerate* many things ſtill to be done, and ſo there would be no Time at all left for Prayers.

But ſome are buſy Men, and they *Love* (more than *Need*) to be ſo. They *plunge* in the Buſineſs, peradventure, to *Save* themſelves from the Prayers. They are for hiding in theſe *Thickets* and Buſhes, (like Guilty *Adam* and *Eve*) from the *Preſence* of God. They will ſtill find themſelves ſomewhat elſe to do; who cannot *Skill* of this Work, nor *Abide* it. Though they can find Time for a hundred *ſmaller* matters; they have none for *this*. They have Time to pick up all the *Stories* of the Neighbourhood, and all the *News* of the Kingdom; and ſo they ſeem not to have Buſineſs *enough* of their own, but muſt have their *Sickle* in every ones *Harveſt*; and tell what this Man ſhould do, and Cenſure another for doing that: And their Tongues run *Diviſions* upon every ones Concerns, as if they had nothing elſe to mind. And yet they want *Leiſure* to go ſpeak with God, about the moſt *Important* Buſineſs of their own *Everlaſting* Salvation. They *Want* it, and they *make* themſelves want it; they *will* want

want it. But *Time* ſhould not fail them, if their *Hearts* did but ſerve them for the Work. The pooreſt *Labourers* will have Time to Eat, and Drink, and Sit, and Chat, and Sleep, and Reſt. And ſure thoſe in Wealthier Circumſtances have more *Command* of their Time. Or who is to be blam'd, if they *Impoſe* harder Neceſſities upon themſelves, and will not better *Conſider* their own Souls. But I ſhall ſhew them, (e're I have done) that there is ſomewhat elſe, and *worſe* yet, than the *Buſineſs*, lying in the way.

David, and *Daniel*, and others, were as much *buſied* as they, yet they *gave* themſelves to *Prayer*, and would find time for that, whatever became of their other *Concerns*. *David* had all the Buſineſs of a *Kingdom* to look after; yet the *Cumber* did not ſo *Diſtract* him, nor the *Pomp* ſo *Dazzle* him, nor the *Pleaſure* ſo *Enguſf* him, as to run him into forgetfulneſs of his *God*, and his *Duty*. No, he minded a greater Buſineſs than the greateſt on *Earth*; and left all to go to the God of his *Life*. And ſo will every one, whoſe *Heart is Right with God*. All the World ſhall not keep them from it. *Love* and *Zeal* will make the Way, and break throw every *Impediment*; and Deſpiſe the Common Pretentions, as very *Inſignificant*, that are counted the *Juſt* Bars, and *Lawful* Hindrances of Prayer, to make ſome Houſes *Exempted* from the Service.

And I muſt be bold to tell you, That it argues either your ſilly *Improvidence*, no better to *Caſt* your Time, and not leave *Space* for that which concerns you *Eternally*: Or elſe your open *Ungodlineſs*, to Prefer your filthy *Lucre*, or your fleſhly *Pleaſure*, before the Bleſſed *Communion* with your Heavenly Father; and not to ſlight all the *World*, rather than the Supreme Eternal *Lord*.

If

If you would be leſs *Worldly*, or more *Orderly*, you ſhould find Time *ſufficient*. And take heed that you do not make *Diverſions*, as well as *Neceſſities*, to defraud the Bleſſed God of his *Service*, and to rob your Souls of your greateſt *Advantage*. Take heed you do not catch hold of *any* Buſineſs, to ſuperſede and rid your Hands of ſomewhat elſe, that is againſt your *Humour*. For you know well enough, what Uſes to be done, when your *Will* is to it, and your *Heart* is ſet upon it. You know how you can ſit up, and Work, to Diſpatch any Worldly Occaſions that you are for *Promoting*. And what is your *Beloved* Work, that ſhall be even your *Every-day's* Work; nay, in the midſt of your greateſt *Buſineſs*, you'll ſteal out for a little ſweet Correſpondence with the *Dear Friend* that you Love above all, when you have him juſt in the *Houſe* with you, or very *near* to you. And if God be the chiefly *Beloved* of your Souls, you will make ſuch a *Looſe*, from all Occaſions in the World, to *get to him*, and even *Force* the Opportunity for it, rather than *want* it. And would you *Adjourn* every Buſineſs elſe, that *his* might be diſpatched: Would you *leave* all to *Come* to Him, when yet ſo *much* lies upon you: This, this would be indeed *acceptable* to Him, and the *kindlier* taken by Him.

But amidſt all the Buſineſs, beware that you have not Time for *Forgery*, and Coining falſe *Counterfeit* Reaſons, which you know will never paſs with *Him*; to whom you muſt give *Account*. Do not betray the wretched *Hypocriſy* of this Pretence, at your *Idle* Times and your *Spare* Hours, when it is *Vacation* with you, and you have even *Nothing* to do: And yet even then, no more ſhall be done for *God*, than when you were never ſo much *taken* up. Nay, when you can be ſo laviſh

even

even of God's *Conſecrated* Time, and commit *Sacrilege* upon the Hallowed Seaſon; to make it ſerve for any thing, rather than his *Holy Service*. And then it ſeems you have *too much* Time, and yet it is all one, as when you had *too little*; that is, you find Occaſion to *Shift* off the Work, even at *all* Times. And on the *Lord's-Day*, when you cannot have the Buſineſs of the *World* in your Hands, then you muſt have ſome *Bauble* in its ſtead; and to *Divert* yourſelves, when the *Sacred* Time lies heavy upon you, ye are ready to run after *Butter-Flies*; to catch hold of any *Occaſional* thing to pluck you from *Attendance* upon the Lord; and glad of any Company or Accident, (though never ſo *Trifling* and *Sportive*) that will but *Relieve* you here, and help to deceive the Work of the *Day*.

O ſee the old *Deceiver* in this, and be not ſo *Fool'd* and *Cheated* out of thoſe precious Hours, that you have, or might have if you would, to Serve your *God*, and to Secure the Salvation of your *Souls*. Conſider, I beſeech you, How little a while it is, till your Mouths will be *Stopt*, and the Days of *Requeſt* will be over; the Times of *Audience*, and all theſe Opportunities of Addreſs to the Majeſty of Heaven, will be *paſt and gone*; and all the fair advantageous Seaſons, of Calling upon the God of your Salvation, will be quite at an End. And you that now complain, you have no Time, ſhall ere long find Cauſe indeed for that *Complaint*; that you have *none*. No, all your Time is *ſlipt* away, and an unchangeable *Eternity* has ſwallowed you up. Yet a little while, and the Door will be *Shut*, and no Hearing; though you Cry never ſo hard, *Lord, Lord, Open to us*. Your *Day* of Grace will ſoon go out in an endleſs *Night*; and your Seaſon of Mercy, the accepted

cepted Time is *now*, even to *Day*. But you know not what ſhall be on the *Morrow*. You have no Aſſurance, but this Day ſhall be your *Laſt*. And then are not you infinitely concerned, as to *Hear* his Voice; ſo let him hear *Yours* to Day? According to his Call, *Iſaiah* 55. 6. *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found: Call upon him, while he is near.* When our Lord ſays, He *comes as a Thief*, and *his Day as a Snare*; and you know not the *Day* nor the *Hour*: O do not ſtand complaining you *want* Time, when you *have* it, but uſe it while you have it; and be in Care to *Live*, as you would be *Found*. And take his own Warning and Charge, *Luke* 21. 36. *Watch ye therefore, and Pray always, that you may be counted worthy to eſcape all Evils that are coming upon the World; and to ſtand before the Son of Man.* And while you wait for his Coming, wait much upon your *Knees*, in your Prayers. And then *Bleſſed is the Servant, whom his Lord when he comes, ſhall find ſo doing.*

3. Some plead *Inſufficiency*, and would be excuſed from Family-Prayers for want of *Ability*. They have not Heads and Memories, Invention and Elocution. Though they can make ſhift to ſay ſomewhat for *themſelves*, yet they ſhould make nothing of it before *others*; but to *Pollute* the Office, *Confound* themſelves, and *Offend* the Company. Therefore as good and *better* never *meddle* with it, not *offer* at it.

To this I anſwer, If you have Senſe and Reaſon, Good Judgment and Voluble Tongues, Skill and Readineſs, to ſpeak well enough of *other* matters, it is your *Inexcuſable* Fault, that you are no better provided *here*. For ſome that have Parts and Boldneſs ſufficient to ſpeak to any

Man;

Man; yet when they ſhould pay the Duty they owe to *God*, all their Wit and Courage fails them; and here they can ſay *Nothing*. If it were to ſpeak for their *Bodies*, and the Concerns of the *World*, they could find their *Tongues*; and who more ready? But when it is for the *Soul*, and for *Heaven*, they are at a *Stand* and *Loſs*; and here would have it paſs for their good *Manners*, to be *Silent*. Now, if ſuch be your Caſe, it ſpeaks rather your *Careleſneſs*, than your *Weakneſs*; and that you do not ſo much want *Skill*, as *Will*, to the Work. And then you are to uſe your Endeavours, better to *Fit* and *Furniſh* your ſelves for it; and beg of God to grant the *Gift* and the *Spirit* of Prayer, that you may Diſcharge it in an acceptable manner; and that you may not be readier to put forth yourſelves in any *Service* elſe, than in his, who made you to *Serve* him, and who *beſt* deſerves all your *Beſt*.

And take heed you forbear not to do it at all; becauſe you think, you cannot do it with a *Fluriſh*, or as well as the *Beſt*. Aim not at Neatneſs and Finery, but Plainneſs and Sincerity. No matter how *Plain*, if it be but *Pertinent*. Do but Honeſtly and Devoutly as you can; and *Task* not yourſelves above what you find your *Strength* to be. Yet uſe yourſelves to it, and by *Practice* you will ſtill Learn to do it *Better*. A great *Zeal* for it, will be like *Wings* to carry you through it. And if you give your *Minds* to it, you'll find yourſelves (even beyond your Expectation) *enabled* to go on with it. Or though you are Infirm and Indiſpoſed for it, and not ſo *Fervent* upon it, yet where there is no Keen *Appetite*, (in Sickneſs) there muſt be ſome *Eating*, or there can be no *Living*; and then even in the *Uſe* of your Food, you may find a better *Stomach*.

When

When Dullneſs is the hindrance; a Serious *Conſideration* may Warm and Rouze you into *Zeal* and *Devotion*. And you will carry the beſt *Prayer-Book* in your own *Breaſt*, when you well work upon your *Hearts*, the lively Senſe and Apprehenſion of your Sins and Wants, your Maladies and Enemies, your Temptations and Dangers; the Corruption of your Nature, and the Deceitfulneſs of your Hearts; the Shortneſs of your Time here, and the Eternity of your Abode elſewhere; the Certainty of Death, and the Dreadfulneſs of Judgment; the Joys of Heaven, and the Pains of Hell; the Miſeries of Others, and the Mercies of God to You and Yours; his Preſence with you, and his Inſpection of you; his Power over you, and his Juſtice to give you what belongs to you; the Neceſſity of a Saviour, and the Fulneſs of his Satisfaction; his All-ſufficiency and Inclination to do for you; and the Uſefulneſs and Prevalency of Prayer, to help you to all that you can Need or Crave. Theſe and the like Thoughts ſet Home, and duly *pondered* in your Minds, will raiſe ſuch a *Stock* and Supply at hand, that you need not be to ſeek for the *Materials* of your Prayers.

But where your own Experience tells you, That all this will not do. God be thanked, you have *Variety* of other helps in a readineſs; and you may provide yourſelves with Choice of ſuch *Books* of Devotion, as you find moſt proper and agreeable to your Condition. And if you do not only *Read*, but *Pray* over thoſe *Forms*, provided to your Hands, and *Inform* them with a *Soul*, and bring a *Spirit* to the *Book*, and put *Life* into the *Dead Letter*, your poor Offering then ſhall be nevertheleſs Acceptable and Effectual, for uſing the Words of *Others*, when the *Devotion* is your

your own: And you do it not in this manner to ſave your *Labour*, but becauſe you think another has Expreſt it *better* for you, than you can do for yourſelves.

But when ſuch as theſe are all the Helps you have; and you think it enough to *have* them: And there let them lie by, *Idle* in your Houſes; they may ſo little *Befriend* you, as to prove ſome of the *Books* opened in the *Judgment*, to bring in Evidence againſt you, for ſuch Supine *Oſcitance*, and Shameful *Lazineſs*, that you would not ſo much as be at the Pains to uſe them. And who will then regard your Complaints of the *Cold*, if you *may*, and Will not, go to the *Fire*? You are like to continue ſtill *Indiſpoſed*, if you will not endeavour to Read, and Meditate, and Pray your ſelves into a *better* Temper.

There is one Caſe yet, which this will not come down to; and that is, among ſuch of the poorer Sort, as can neither *Read* themſelves, nor have any in their little Families that *can*. Such may plead the *Inability*, for which you may think there is no *Remedy*. Yet have I heard a Man pray with *Fervency* and *Propriety* of Speech, that did not know a *Letter* of the Book. And he that *ordains Strength out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings*, can make the *Illiterate* herein to exceed the *Scholars*. But where he is not pleaſed to make up the *Educator*'s Neglects with ſuch *Extraordinary* Gifts; yet they that cannot *Read*, may notwithſtanding (without Book) know their *Sins*, and *Confeſs* them; and for Chriſt's Sake beg *Pardon* of them, and *Power* againſt them: And for *Grace*, to be pleaſing unto God; and by his Goodneſs, to be *Provided* for here, and *Saved* for ever. And when they do but this heartily, as to the Lord, they ſhall be heard without their *Much-ſpeaking*.

And

And further than this, they may *Learn* a Prayer by the help of *others*. And I ſcarce know how any that *frequent* our Churches, can Eſcape the *Learning* and Remembring ſome of thoſe Prayers, which they have heard ſo many *hundred* times over. And if they do but carry away the *Confeſſion*, with which we begin at *Church*, and the *Prayer of our Lord*, and here and there a ſhort *Collect*; they may make a Service of this at Home, as Good in the ſight of Heaven, as that of their better *Accompliſht* Neighbours, becauſe it is the *Beſt* that they can offer. And now by theſe means, all may be ſo helpt out, that none ſhall find any Excuſe for his *Impiety*, from his *Inability*.

4. Some would juſtify their Neglect of Family-Prayer, for want of *Company*. Either others *Abroad*, to Accompany them in it; or ſuch Partners at *Home*, as are fit for it.

1. They plead the want of Company *Abroad*. It is a thing ſo out of *Uſe* in Multitudes of Families, yea, and many that are of Good *Reputation*, and well Eſteemed in the World; but here and there a *Few* that keep it up, and appear for it, and are conſtant in it. And would you have us then to *Upbraid* our honeſt Neighbours, with our Pretenſions to be *Wiſer* and *Better* than the reſt? Would you perſuade us to be ſo *Unfaſhionable* and *Singular*, as to Expoſe ourſelves to *Cenſure* and *Laughter*?

I hope the Omiſſion is not ſo *Common*, nor the Practice ſuch a *Rarity*, as the Objection intimates: And that it is not yet grown ſuch a *Scandalous* thing for a Family of *Chriſtians*, to *Joyn* daily

daily together, to give the higheſt Honour they are able to their *Lord*. I am willing to think with more *Charity* of a *Chriſtian* Country. And as much *Truth* as is in the contrary, is (I am ſure) as much *Reproach* to us; and one of the worſt things that could be ſaid of us. But the Univerſality of *Sober* Men have another Senſe of the Matter; and cannot but think the *better* of thoſe Families, that ſhew ſuch *Exemplary* Piety, as all the reſt ought to *Imitate*. And if any ſeem well to *Poſt* without it, they would be much more *Praiſe-worthy* with it. Whatever elſe is commendable in them, their *Caſting* out the Worſhip of God, caſts a ſoul *Blot* upon them. For tho here and there a Prophane Wretch foams out his own *Shame*, in throwing Contempt and *Deriſion* on the Praying-Families, and making their *Serioufneſs* his *Sport*: Such *Revilers* of them, may too late wiſh, That themſelves had been found *among* them, when the Lord ſhall come with Ten thouſands of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon ſuch *Scoffers*, for all their hard *Speeches* which they have ſpoken againſt Him; to *Diſgrace* and *Interrupt* his Servants in the way, where he put them; and where it would better become thoſe who profeſs the ſame Holy Religion to *Follow* them, than to *Object* their Faithfulneſs againſt them, and turn their *Piety* to their *Infamy*.

But, if any here wonder at your *Singularity*, you have much more Cauſe to wonder at their *Impiety*; and let them *Wonder on*, but for all that, do you *Pray on*: As you are taught by a very great *Example*, *Pſalm* 71. 7. *I am as a Monſter to many: But thou art my Strong Refuge.* I care not how *Prodigious* they account the *Practice*, as long as I find how *Bleſſed* is the *Benefit*. You may as much Deſpiſe their *mighty Numbers*, as they De-

ſpiſe

ſpiſe your *numerous Prayers*; and ſtill think but ſo much the *better* of them, becauſe ſuch as *they* are againſt them. To Season your Houſes with Religion, and make it *Familiar* to your People; if this be to *Break* the Cuſtom, it is ſuch a Cuſtom ſure, as has great need to be *Broken*. What if *Few* do follow this way? Has not our Lord told us, That Few do find the Way to *Life*? And has he not intimated the *Reaſon* to be, becauſe ſo few do *Strive* to Enter? And is not the Chief of all our *Striving* in our *Praying*? But is not all the *Struggle* in Prayerleſs-Families quite of another Nature? Alas, all Careleſs Sinners are ſo far from ſtriving to Enter in at the *Strait Gate*; that they ſcarce ſet their Faces this way, ſo much as to *Seek after it*. And theſe, I confeſs, are a *vaſt* Number. But yet ſuch as are now for a *Poll*, and Glory in being of the *bigger* Number, will not find it for their *Intereſt* to ſtick to that *way*, and there be *Found*, when the great Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls ſhall come to Separate the *Sheep* from the *Goats*. For though they had far more than they have on their *Side*; the *little Flock* will then have the Infinite *Advantage* of them, when their Father ſhall give them the Kingdom; and at the ſame time *Diſown* them that were *Aſham'd* of him, and thought his Worſhip a *Diſparagement* to their *Houſes*; turning them over to the *Maſter*, whom they *Scorn'd* before *Him*; and who had more of their *Devotion*, than their *Rightful* Lord could ever get from them. And upon whomſoever the *Scorn* and *Confuſion* is now caſt, they ſhall then, to their *Coſt*, find to whom it *Belongs*.

One thing under this Head, (though I do but *touch*) I muſt not *Slip*. For I have heard it objected, That even ſome *Miniſters* do not keep up

theſe

these Prayers in their *Families*. And if they that have the Sacred Calling, which brings them so *Nigh* to God, to stand *between* him and the People, do not think themselves *Obliged* to it: What can you expect from the *Laity*, from *Tradesmen* and *poor Labourers*? If they that are the *Mouth* of the rest, be *Dumb* and Speechless this way; must the *People* usurp the Office of their *Teachers*, and take upon 'em to *Teach* them? *i. e.* To Teach them better things than their Own *Practice*?

I am willing to believe, That this is all *Calumny*: And that there is no Foundation for it, in matter of *Fact*, shall I say, or foul *Neglect*. But if there be any of my *Brethren*, that give no better *Patterns*: (As there were *Pastors so Brutish, not to seek the Lord*, Jer. 10 21. And our *Lord* himself had one of the *Function*, that was more for what he could get of the *World*, to Fill the *Bag*; than to Draw down Blessings from *Heaven*, and to be *Filled* with all the Fulness of *God*:) I will take the Boldness to drop a Word of *Exhortation*, even for Them, whose business it is to *Exhort* others.

I Beseech you Brethren, by the Mercies of God, and by all that is *Dear* to you in the World; Do not throw such a *Stumbling-Block* before your People; nor so *Block* up your own Passage to the *Throne of Grace*. You know, that your Work is not only to *Preach* to them, but to *Pray* for them, and to recommend their Case unto Him that is able to *Help* them; and to give you *Success* among them; and to *Bless* all your Labours bestowed upon them. And shall the House of the *Man of God*, be void and empty of the *Worship of God*? What Good then are you like to do them, by all that you say to them, at the *House of God*? They will be more *Inquisitive* after your Orders at *Home*, than *Deter-*

mined by your Rules at *Church*. And all your moſt *Elaborate* Preaching will not *Help* them; ſo much as your *Scandalous* Neglect of Praying *Hinders* them: Tho you *Extol* Prayer (*profoundly*) from the *Pulpit*, for a Flouriſh, to Set off your ſelves; (and indeed unto ſuch as are acquainted with your *Domeſtick* Practice, to *Condemn* your ſelves;) Alas, Why ſhould they *Regard* that, which they know you ſo to *Slight*? Let your *Houſes* then, as well as your *Sermons*, ſhew them what they have to do. And let not your own *Walls*, as well as your Neighbours *Mouths*, cry out of you, for unfit to take Care of the *Church of God*; when you no better *Rule your own Houſe*, 1 Tim. 4. 5, 6. You have a *Talent* to Exerciſe, which the other Appointed Offices leave but little *Room* for at the *Church*. I mean, The *Gift* of Prayer. And where can you ſtir up and improve that Gift of *God* in you, ſo well as in your *Family*? O do not hang all upon the *Common Charge* then, to Live only upon the *Publick Stock*: Nor let that *Privy Key* which God has given you, to his Treaſures, lye by and *Ruſt*, for want of *Uſe*. But *Uſe* it; and *Love* to Uſe it. And that not only to Stop the Peoples *Mouths*, but to bleſs and enrich (together with their *Souls*) your own *Houſes* and your *Hearts*.

This to a *Few*, I hope, to a *very* Few. But now again to All.

If you do not look altogether upon *Others*, by them to determine your own Practice: If you will not *Refuſe* to take the way for Heaven, till ſuch time as you can have all the *Country* along with you. Yet

2. Do you ſuſpend the Family-Prayer, becauſe you have not *Company* at Home, fit to join with you in it? Why, what's the matter with them? Are

Are they ſuch *Ignorant* Creatures, they know not what belongs to Prayers? Or ſuch *Wicked* Sinners, That God will not *Hear* them, but count their Prayer *Abomination*? Yes, you think, they are ſome of them ſo *Dark* and *Stupid*; and all of them *Corrupt* and *Unconverted*.

But take heed that you do not involve your ſelves in as bad a *Guilt*, when by the *Raſh* Judgment you paſs your Sentence without certain *Knowlege*; and ſo may *Condemn* thoſe whom *God* will not. Or put the Caſe to the worſt, that it is as Bad as you *Suſpect* with them: Yet how do you know but that God has *Deſigns* of Everlaſting Love to them? And what can you tell, but in time by your very *Prayers* he will *Call* and *Convert* them? Would not you have them lye in the *Way*, and under the Uſe of his Preſcribed *Means*? What would become of all our Prayers at *Church*, if the Preſence of *wicked* men ſhould ſpoil them? Tho it is then a mighty Encouragement and Advantage, to have Right Hearted Zealous *Partners* to ſtrive with us in our Prayers; (and inſtead of throwing Water upon the *Sparks*, to bring their *Bellows* to Blow up Devotion into a *Flame*:) Yet you muſt not therefore forbear the Service, becauſe you have not ſuch as you could *wiſh*, to aſſiſt in it: But Pray the *Harder* with them, and for them; that they may be made ſuch as you would have them. For even the *Wicked* ſhall not be Rejected, *Returning*. But how ſhall they get out of their *Wickedneſs*, without their *Prayers*? Their *Praying* is one great Expreſſion of their *Repenting*, and the very Way of their *Returning*. And ſo the Calling them to *Prayer*, is a Calling them to *Repent*, and *Turn* to the Lord, *i. e.* To do the thing whereof they have the greateſt *Need* of any thing in the World. 'Tis your kindeſt *Charity*

then to Put them upon it; and you could not be more *Cruel*, than to *Excommunicate* them from it.

5. Some throw by the Family-Prayers for want of Succeſs. They ſee them do no *Good* upon many that *Uſe* them: and they find themſelves never the *Better* for them: and ſo they are *Heartleſs* to be *Concerned* with them.

I confeſs men may here as well as elſewhere, beſtow Labour in *Vain*, if they will. For the Prayers will not work like *Potions* or *Plaiſters*, by mere Application: and all that *Uſe* them will not of neceſſity be *Healed* by them. For it is not the *Bare* uſe, but the *Right* uſe, that will make them effectual. *Many* do give them the beſt Commendation, in the Good *Fruits*, that they make appear, Produced by them: and can put to their own *Seal*, for the Bleſſed *Effects*. And ſuch as are ſtill too Bad *With* them, might have been yet much Worſe *Without* them. And you that Complain, for want of *Experience* in your ſelves, of any thing done by your Prayers, whereof you can make your *Boaſt*; Peradventure may know the *Fault*, where it *Sticks*; that they are no more *proſperous*. And then your wiſeſt Courſe is, Not to *Fall out* with the Prayers, but to *Correct* your ſelves; and Remove that which *Hinders*, out of the way. That ſo you may order the matter to more advantage; and not ſtill be *Counting* over the Treaſure, and grow never the *Richer*: But ſo *Pray* to God, That you may find Cauſe to *Bleſs* God, for what you have got by the *Trade*. And for that Way of Management, I am to give ſome Advice, before I have done.

But here let me Caution you, from making Haſty Concluſions, and Denying the *Fruit* of Prayer;

Prayer; only from your preſent *Senſe* of the Matter. For you may have the *Benefit*, which you do not *Obſerve*; and the Prayers may do you Good many *other* Ways; tho you Perceive not the Good, to your Mind, in ſome particular *Manner*, propoſed or expected by your ſelves. The *Phyſick* that makes *Sick*, is yet in order to *Health*. And you muſt not Look for the *Harveſt*, aſſoon as the Seed is *Sown*. *God will Avenge his own Elect, that cry day and night to him: Tho he bear long with them*, *Luke* 18. 7. Yea he will do it *Speedily*: That is, The very *Firſt Fit* Opportunity: Tho not ſo Soon as they might make *Account*. And tho you do not *now* Feel the Benefit, you muſt *Wait* till you do; and Believe, That you ſhall be the *Better*, for Following the *Courſe*, which *He* himſelf *puts* you upon; who has Pleaſure in the Proſperity of his Servants; and does not bid the Houſe of *Jacob*, nor any *Houſe* of Yours, *Seek his Face in vain*.

But after all theſe Complaints, of wanting a *Command*, and *Time*, and *Ability*, and *Company*, and *Succeſs*: There are other Wants, that more *need* to be Complained of, for Hindring theſe Prayers. Tho they be Wants here *leſs* Obſerved. Even, The Want of *Wiſdom*, *Humility*, *Zeal*, a *Heavenly Mind*, *The Love of God*, and *a Holy Life*. As I ſhall ſhew next, in pointing out the *Real Cauſes*, That Family-Prayer is ſo much Neglected. And theſe Cauſes I take to be, *Ignorance*, *Pride*, *Sloth*, *Worldlineſs*, *Enmity to God*, and *The Love of Sin*.

1. *Ignorance* is a Cauſe. For the Prayerleſs Families do not *Know*, or they will not *See* (which is the worſt Ignorance of all, becauſe a Wilful one,) the *Needs* of their Souls, which ſhould

Haſten them to their Prayers: Nor ſee the things of their *Peace*, which ſhould make them *Glad* to be ſo Employed. Many paſs for Knowing men, yea, Deep and Sharp, Shrewd and Politick; and they are really *Wiſe* in their Generation: Who more Cunning, to Serve their own Turns, and to bring about their Worldly Ends? But to do their *Soul* Good, and to render themſelves for ever *Happy*, They have no *Knowledge*. To *Ingratiate* themſelves with the Beſt of all *Friends*, and and to *Compaſs* the moſt Bleſſed of all *Ends*, in the matters of God's Holy *Religion*, and their own Eternal *Salvation*. Here all their Skill *fails* them. They act as *Ideots* and *Novices*; and ſhew the extreme *Folly*, in turning away from the Supreme *Felicity*. And tho they cannot chuſe but get ſome Knowledge of *God* in his *Creatures*, yet they do not Know him in his Son; nor as Revealed in his *Word*; nor as ſhewing his *Power* and his *Glory* in the *Sanctuary*. They do not Know how *Great* he is; or elſe they would more *Fear* him: Nor how *Good* he is to his Servants; or elſe they would be more *with* him, when they might *Get* ſo much by him. And tho they make a *Quarrel*, upon the Charge of *Ignorance*; as did the *Phariſees* with our Saviour, *Joh.* 9. 40. *Are we Blind?* They take it heinouſly, that ſuch *Pretenders* to know more than all the reſt, ſhould be brought in with their *Ignoramus*. But he told them, (next *ver.*) That as much as they did ſee, only help'd to *Aggravate* their Guilt; and ſo they but Knew how to Increaſe their *Condemnation*; and were Witty, but to get themſelves the more *Stripes*. How many are ready to Brag, with *Laodicea*, *Rev.* 3 17. That *they are Rich, and encreas'd with Goods, and have need of nothing*: When God knows, *They are Miſerable and Wretched, and Poor and Blind and Naked*?

ked? They do not Know what Case *themselves* are in. They are mere Strangers at *Home*; and have no Good *Acquaintance* with their own *Souls*. They would Face us down, That their Hearts are *Right*, and very *Good*; when God's Word pronounces them *Deceitful* and Desperately *Wicked*: And they never shew us, what they are Good for, in Pouring out of the *Abundance* of them before the Lord.

David begg'd hard of God, and made this his Argument to prevail and speed, *For I am Poor and Needy*, *Psalm* 86. 1. Tho he were a *Wealthy Prince*, that wanted for nothing of the *World*; yet he was so *Wise a Man*, as to know what *Need* he had of *God*. And it is this *Spiritual Poverty*, that furnisheth us with the best *Sagacity*: The Sense of *Indigence* at Home, that sets us upon *Seeking* Abroad. Thus the Poor in Spirit, tho they may seem to be such as have *less Need*, than some of their Neighbours, yet they Pray *more* and *oftner*: And herein shew themselves the *Wiser*; because they understand their own Occasions *better*.

But the Prayerless Families do not know what's Good for themselves: How to *Traffick* with that Kingdom, where is *all* to be had; nor how to get the richest *Stock*; to raise a *Fund* and Estate *Inexhaustible*; and to make their *Fortune* and themselves for ever. If they well understood themselves indeed, they would take their *Time*, while a *Price* is put into their *Hands*; and not turn their *Backs* so upon the Blessed *Giver* of all Good, and lose *All*, because they would not come to his *Gates*, nor lye waiting every Day, to *Receive* of his Infinite *Fulness*. They'd be as forward as any to call *Fools*, where they saw Men thus slight and neglect all their fairest *Advantages* in this

World. And what are they better, that will turn themſelves out of all the *Higheſt* Good, World without end, becauſe they would not ſet themſelves to *Ask*, till the Time when it was *too late* to be found?

And then they that thought with themſelves, We will not be ſuch *Fools*, to lie waiting thus, and ſpend our *Time*, and our *Strength*, in our Prayers; ſhall cry out of themſelves, *We Fools*, would not take *God's* (Way), but made account to do better in our *own*: We *miſtook* our Buſineſs, and our Intereſt both, in preferring our *Humour* and our *Pleaſure*, before our *Conſcience* and *Obedience*. And now we perceive how the God of this World *infatuated* our Minds, and *blinded* our Eyes; how the *Old Serpent* was *too old* for us, and his Subtilty *out-witted* us, and made worſe than *Babies* of us; to fill our Hearts with deadly *Prejudice* againſt Chriſt's way of receiving the Kingdom of God, *as little Children*. And we have refuſed all the *Offers* of Eternal Glory: We would not *Keep* in with Him, in whoſe Hands was all our *Life* and *Bliſs*. But we *Rawbied* from him, and took more care for an *Inch* of Time, than for the *Never-ending* Eternity. O, whither are we going? And what ſhall we do now *for ever*? Had we *Wiſt*, what would have been the *Iſſue*, we would have taken another Courſe; we would have Cleav'd to the *Lord*, and Stuck to our *Prayers*; inſtead of *Adoring* the World, and *Serving* our Luſts. But now the Time is *paſt*, and we are *loſt*; and have loſt All paſt *Recovery*, and muſt bear the Eternal *Brand* and *Smart* of our *Folly*. O, it is the end, that muſt make appear, Who were *Wiſe*, and Who the *Fools*. And when Launching hence into the World to come, Then that *Wiſdom* of the World which

which is *Foolishness* with God, will shew to be no *better*, even in the *Worldlings* own sight. Then ye the Prayerless-Families will open their Eyes, and y see their *Error*, and find that they were *quite out*; and did but *Trifle* and play the *Fool*, when you threw by the *Work* of God, to find you somewhat elſe to do; and that it was your *Ignorance* which kept you from your *Prayers*. y you

2. Another Cauſe of this Neglect is *Pride*. For 'tis the *Proud* Heart that makes Men ſo *Stiff* in the Knees. *The Wicked through the Pride of his Countenance will not Seek after God*, *Pſalm* 10. 4. He that is ſo Full of *Himſelf*, ſees no *Need* he has to lie *Begging* at the Throne of Grace. When ſo highly conceited of his own *Dignity*, he takes it for a reproachful *Diminution* of himſelf, for ſuch a one as He, to be commonly ſeen in lowly *Proſtrations* to the Majeſty of Heaven. He counts himſelf too *Good*, to be God's *Humble* Servant: And Scorns it, as *Below* him, to own any in his Houſe *Above* him: fearing it would *Leſſen* and *Loſe* him with his Family; if, before them, he ſhould pay his Great Lord the daily *Homage* and *Fealty*: That it would be too great a *Degrading* and Diſparagement for him, *to Worſhip, and bow down, and Kneel* (with them) *before the Lord his Maker*. O wretched *Worm!* (I cannot forbear) Thou pitiful *Bit* of ſtiff *Dirt!* How doſt thou *forget* thy ſelf, and utterly *miſtake* the way to Honour? When thou makeſt account to keep up thy *Port* and *Grandeur* among thy People, with Huffing and Swaggering, Looking Big, and Talking Loud, and carrying ſo High, as if it were too great a *Blemiſh* to thy Quality, to be every Day upon thy *Knees* in thy Family. When, alas, in the Worſhip of God, all are *Equal*, and no

Reſpect of Perſons. But as the *Hills* on the Earth diſappear, and bear no *Proportion* at all, but the Whole ſhews to Heaven as a ſmooth perfect *Globe*: So the *Metaphorical* Mountains are made *Low*, and the Vallies *Raiſed* before the Lord. And all, of what Degree ſoever, are on a *Level* in his Preſence. Only that the moſt *High* has chiefeſt Reſpect unto the *lowly*. And the *Lower* any Stoops in the Humbling himſelf, the *Higher* does he Riſe in the Bleſſed God's Acceptance. 'Tis then by *Abaſing* thy ſelf in the Duſt of the *Earth*, that thou wilt get *neareſt* to him who Dwells in the *Heavens*. Which is the Wonder, the *Riddle*, the *Myſtery* of Humility; but the Word of the Lord has eſtabliſht it for an undoubted *Verity*; That he whoſo *Humbleth* himſelf, ſhall be *Exalted*. But when thou art not more Pliable to Bend, and too Stubborn to be brought thus *Down*; take heed he do not bring thee down a worſe way, and yet more againſt thy Heart; to make the Sturdy Enemy his *Footſtool*, and daſh thee in pieces as a *Potters Veſſel*.

There are a ſort of *Independents*, that *Set* up for themſelves, and *Live* to themſelves, and make themſelves their only *End*; *Atheiſts* indeed, that Live without *God* in the World. As if he had nothing to do with *Them*, nor they with *Him*. And their Cry to him, is like that, *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, We will come no more unto thee*, *q. d.* We Scorn to *Wait* upon thee. Who is Lord over us? What is this Lord of Heaven and Earth, that we ſhould Obey him? The Application may ſeem too *Keen* to any among us. But I ſhall leave all *Prayerleſs* Maſters and Families to Examine themſelves, whether they be not *Aſhamed* of the Humble Worſhip of God, and for meer *Pride*, will not be *Seen* in it. And at the ſame time

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to bethink themselves, what a silly, idle Attempt it is, for any to make account of setting up their own *Reputation*, upon the *Ruine* of his Glory.

And if any may think, it pinches too much upon the Priviledge of a *Gentleman*, to throw himself down *promiscuously* among his *Inferiors*, in the Worship of his Maker; that it is for poor *Sneaks*, and *Abject* Spirits, so to *Creep* and *Grovel*, and Lick the Dust, and Beg and Supplicate, not only for their *Lives*, but even for their *Daily-Bread*. If with the Arrogant *Lucifer*, they would not suffer God to be the *most* High, but would be like him, and as High as *He*. If they would have their Dependance upon him, and their Submission to him, kept as a mighty *Secret*; not to be *Divulg'd* by such Humble Acknowledgment and *Self-Abasement*. If they count this the way to keep up their *Pre-eminence*, and to render themselves the more *Considerable*. I shall leave it to their Wisdom, a little better to *Advise* upon this Point; Whether it would not be more for their Credit and Honour, to be less Haughty and Silly? And whether *Glittering* Worms are ever the less *Worms* and *Vile*, because they will so *forget* themselves, as to Aspire after an *Equality* with the *Highest*? And whether we must so Count them our *Betters*, as to forget, that there is an infinitely *better* than they? In fine, whether themselves would not be much *Better* to be *Humbler*; and by the *Low* Abasement of themselves in the Sight of *God*, get them a worthier *Esteem* among all Men, whose Judgment is *worth* the Regarding.

3. *Sloth* is another Cause of this *Neglect*. And, O how many Families omit the daily Worship of

of God too *Troubleſome* to be endured among them? Some, for *Lazineſs*, will not do the thing, which yet they ſeem to *Approve* of; and to wiſh it *done*, if *Wiſhing* would do it; but they will not be at the Trouble. They have catch'd the Spiritual *Cold*, which Benums them to all *Holy* things. And here they are ſo Liſtleſs and *Flaggy*, they will not lay out themſelves, nor Exerciſe their *Parts* to *Conceive* a Prayer; no, nor Charge their *Memories* to *bear* one: Nor lower yet, but ſo much as go over the *Forms* prepared by others for their Aſſiſtance. But though they are Brisk, and Nimble, and *Laborious* in other Buſineſs; yet are Heavy and *Dead* to this Work; and cannot find their Hearts, nor their Hands, nor any Powers, to fall about it, or to go through with it. They are *Alive* to the World, and full of *Mettle* for their Bodily Concerns, and their Fleſhly Pleaſures: At any ones *Call*, for their Temporal Gain and Advantage. But when the Lord bids them *Seek* his Face, they are *dull* of Hearing: When his Service is to be *Attended*, their Strength is *departed*. No Delight, nor Readineſs to do the Will of God. No Preparations to *Meet* him; no Caring and Contriving; no Labouring and Striving for the Bleſſed *Fellowſhip* with him; but all for Slipping the Yoke, and Hiding and Stealing from the *Irkſome* Imployment. So many *Hours* they are at it, even from Morning to Night, for the *Back* and *Belly*; but one *Quarter* of an Hour ſhall be grudg'd, as too much to wait upon the *Lord* in any Holy Duty. They have both *Legs* ready to run upon the World's *Errands*; but when call'd upon Service to their Maſter in Heaven, they are ſtark *Lame*, and cannot Stir. With what Vigorous *Efforts* will they beſtir themſelves, to gain their worldly *Points*? And though they

they meet ſometimes with *unſeiſible* things in the way, to *Baffle* their Attempts: Yet, again and again, they are at it, to try what they can make of it. But when they ſhould be taken up with *God*, yea, when it is to win *Chriſt*, and inherit the Kingdom of *Heaven*, here the Men of *Might* are as *Weak* as Water, and nothing to be done, let who will take all, for them.

And is this (do you think) a hopeful *Preparation* for Heaven? And like the *Taking* it, even by *Force*? Does it not indeed look more like a Concern and Endeavour, all they can, to Shun and *Eſcape* it? *Is* this the ſeeking Glory, Honour, and Immortality, by *Patient* Continuance in well-doing, and the *Fervency* of Spirit in ſerving the Lord? Can ſuch *Truants* and *Triflers* in the Worſhip of God, ever think this is the Way to come to him, and to *Live* for ever with him? Can they look to be regarded in the number of his *Servants*, that will not ſo much as put themſelves upon his *Service*? And can they promiſe themſelves all the *Eaſe* and *Reſt* of his Kingdom, and all the *Welcome* and *Pleaſures* of his Houſe, that would never *Labour* in his Vineyard, nor be at any *Pains* to do their Heavenly Father's Buſineſs? Alas, What's all their Confidence worth, to Reckon of having *All*, when they will do even *Nothing*? To think ſure of getting to the Bleſſed *End*, when they ſcarce tread a Step in the *Way* that leads thither? Do they applaud themſelves in the *Negative* Goodneſs, and think it enough, that they are not miſchievous *Plagues* to their Neighbours; and to ſay, They do no *Hurt*? Not to diſpute the *Truth* of that Aſſertion, which they would be hard put to it, to make *Good*: Yet, *Matth.* 25. 30. you may hear a dreadful Doom paſt upon a Man, *To be caſt into outer*

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Darkneſs, where ſhall be Weeping and Gnaſhing of Teeth. Not becauſe he was a *Stigmatized* notorious Sinner, but a *Slothful* and Unprofitable Servant. It was no part of his *Indictment* there, That he had *Murder'd*, or *Rob'd*, or plaid any *Villanous* Pranks in the World; But that he went and *hid* his Lord's Talent in the *Earth*. He was *Idle*, and good for nothing, at any *Holy Duties*, to Glorify and Serve the Lord. And ſo his Sloth and Negligence was his Bane and Damnation. O think of this, and ſadly think of it again, all *Prayerleſs Families*; that Bury your Parts and Endowments ſo in the *Earth*, that they are all loſt to *Heaven*: And when the God that *Gave* them, ſhould have the *Uſe* of them, they are *out of the way*, and no ſuch thing to be heard of. If you do not do a little *more* and *better*, than you have done; it's doubt, you will hear of another *Greeting* from the Lord, than *Well done*, *Good and Faithful Servant*.

4. *Worldlineſs* is the common Cauſe of this Neglect, and the utter *Ruin* of the Family-Religion. Where *Mammon* is the *Miſtreſs*, *God* ſhall not be Owned and Attended, as the *Maſter* of the Houſe. No, by that time *She* is ſerved, his *Part* is gone. This is his great *Rival*, that ſtands in Competition with him, for our *Hearts* and *Service*. And how frequently is the *Uſurper* aforehand with the Bleſſed *Owner*? And comes and gathers up all the *Rents* and *Dues*? And then at his Demand nothing's to be had; all *diſpos'd* of another way, and gone, paſt the true Proprietor's *Retrieving*. And then though he *ſtretch forth his Hand all day long*; there's nothing but Rebelling and and Gain-ſaying: Either downright *denying*, *We will not have Him to Reign over us*, Or a *Fraudu-*

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lint Put-off, *When I have a convenient Season, I will send for thee.* We are too *Busy* now, it cannot be. And *to Morrow shall be as this Day*, and so the next, and the next. And this Injurious *Invader* seldom lets go the Hold, but rather strengthens the *Interest* by long *Possession*. And no *Wedging* in Religion here, among a Family of Worldlings. They are still so *Full*, the Vessel will contain *no more*. They cannot hold their Hands, and throw by the *Rumble*, never so little. And if any Office of Divine Worship is ever *stirring* among them, they are *Patients* all the while, as under the *Chirurgions* Hands; they bear it as a heavy *Interruption* to their more *beloved* Concerns, and long to have it, as soon as possible, out of the way, that they may get into their *Element* again. And what is not quite *turned* out, yet shall be so Run up in the *Narrows*, that it *Dwindles* all away into an Empty *Formality*. And no body *Cares* for it. No body gets any *Good* by it. And, alas, How can the Wings *mount* up, that are so *loaded* with thick Clay? And when is it like to be better with them?

Though sometimes they may talk of *Lessening* the Business, to Retrench the *Encroachment*; yet how commonly is it but *Talk*? For the *Love* of Riches is still a *Temptation*, rather to *Engulf* and *Overload* themselves with more, to lay further *Snares* for their Souls, as if they were not *Fast* enough in already. And then they are *Snappish* and Cross, to be taken off. What, would you have us *Beggars*, or turn our Houses into *Monasteries*? Indeed we would have you to be God's Beggars, and to think yourselves more concern'd to lie waiting for his *Favour*, than to *Court* the Smiles of the World; and with such a wise and holy Care, to Divide and Order your *Time*, as

to

to make *Room* ſtill for God's *Worſhip*; even without your Hindrance for the World. Or where you muſt *Pinch* upon the one or the other: Let it not be on God's *Part*. But be ſure to have him *firſt* ſerved, and the World only us'd *under* Him, and never to *ſteal* away the Service from him.

Nay, we would not have you render your Condition *worſe* than it is, nor to deprive yourſelves of the Happy *Benefits* that you might have; nor thus to *Diſpute* yourſelves out of the higheſt *Privilege* in the World. As to cry you Serve God in your *Ordinary* Calling; and that may ſuffice for you. And let ſuch Diſcharge the other Services, (here pleaded for) that have fitter *Opportunities* for them. And you ſhall not *Envy* them the *Preferment*. I grant that you Serve God (as well as yourſelves and the Publick) one way, by ſerving your *Generation*, in faithfully and uſefully *Diſcharging* your ſeveral *Places*. And let them be never ſo Mean and *Servile*, you ſhall be as acceptable to God in them, as if you were in the moſt *Honourable* Poſts, and the *Higheſt* Stations. But yet ſure you would not think, that theſe poor *Hindes*, which are *Drudging* and *Moyling* abroad, would argue very *wiſely* for themſelves, when their Lord ſhould Send and *Invite* them to come to him in his *Parlour* at certain times, and there do ſome of the *Better* Offices, of Waiters upon him; yea, and Embolden them to *Sit down* and *Talk*, and *Eat*, and *Drink*, with him; if they ſhould Decline and Refuſe it, ſaying, They ſerv'd him in the *Field*; and therefore he could not blame them for not doing him any Service. But as to the *immediate* Attendance and Favour offered, they had rather be *Excuſed*; and let who would take the Office.

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The Queen of *Sheba* had a better Opinion of ſuch Service; when ſhe ſo applauded the Advantage of *Solomon*'s Attendants, 1 *Kings* 10. 8. *Happy are thy Men; happy are theſe thy Servants which ſtand continually before thee.* And if the *Leaſt* of you may be ſo *Taken* up with a Greater than *Solomon*, and are not only *Permitted*, but *Invited* to come ſo *Near* him, and to be ſo *Free* with him; and yet you *Pray* him to have you *Excuſed*, becauſe you are Serving him in your *Particular Callings*: I think your *Refuſal* will not commend your *Piety*, ſo to decline the Opportunities of drawing *Nigh* to your God; nor yet commend your *Wiſdom* to care no more for that *Honour* and *Favour*, than which the *Kings* of the Earth, and the *Angels* in Heaven, cannot have a greater.

Whatever be your ſeveral ways of *Subſiſting* in the World; (which are all deſigned but for the *Support* of your Bodies, in the mean while, till you have ſecur'd the *Salvation* of your Souls) O remember, That there is one great *Profeſſion*, which equally *Concerns* you and me, and every one, as the Common *Trade* of us all. And that is, to provide ſo well for our *Eternal* Subſiſtence, that we may live Bleſſedly for ever, in the World to come. And then be not ſo *Intent* upon it, to *Riſe* and get up in this World, to throw yourſelves down, and be utterly undone in the next. But take more Notice of your *Danger*, and be more with God in *Prayer*, to Preſerve you from that common *Slaughter*.

David prayed to be *Delivered from Men of the World, that have their Portion in this Life*, *Pſalm* 17. 14. O beg of God, That you may not be put off with that *wretched* Portion; that the Lord may not turn you over at laſt for your *Reward*, to the *Mammon* which you *ſerved*, and ſay, Take

that

that which you *Choſe*. *You would not come to me, that you might have Life.* You might have had it, if you would have come for it. But you preferred the *Pelf* and *Dung* of the Earth before all the *Treaſures* and *Pleaſures* of Heaven. You made *light* of my Invitation, and *went your ways, one to his Farm, another to his Merchandize*; where you thought you could make better *Markets*. You had rather be the World's bored *Slaves*, than the Lord's *Freemen*, and Followers of God, as dear Children. And now all is gone; and that World, in which you *Truſted* and *Delighted* has *ſhaken* you off. And, what will you do World without end? You thought nothing too much to do for the *Friend*, that in your Wo-Need, *Will* do *Nothing*, *Can* do *Nothing* for you.

O Sirs, did you look more out *beyond* this World; ſure you would be more looking *Up*, and have your Eyes ever *towards* the Lord. Did you ſee the World *paſſing* away, as a Shadow, no more to be for ever? Sure you would not Stick ſo *unreaſonably* to it; nor enduring but ſo much, as for *Prayer-while*, to be *parted* from it. But when you find the World ſo Rude and *Impertinent*, to *Ruſh* in upon the Sacred Offices, and *Mingle* with your Holy Things; either to put you *beſide* them, or to *Interrupt* and Spoil you in them: Never abide the *Intruder* ſo to Damnify your poor Souls, and Defraud your Glorious Maſter. Let it not here ſtick ſo hard with you, that *Chriſt* ſhall not have you. Like the *Cuſtomer*, *Matth.* 19. 22. that went away in his *Dumps*, becauſe he could not have the *Saviour*, but he muſt be *Weaned* from his Wealth. Shall the World fill your Heads and your Mouths, your Hands and your Hearts, as if you had nothing at all to do in it, but only to make your utmoſt *Benefit*

of

of it? Will you be ſo wholly for *Back* and *Belly*, as to Forget and Slight *God* and *Eternity*? O Bethink your ſelves *better*, and then the Lord ſhall Hear of you *oftner*. And then you'll make the World ſtand *Aſide*, till he has his *Attendance* paid: And not Run your ſelves out of *Breath* in Purſuit of *Mammon*; Till you have no *Breath* to lay out in Calling upon *God*; nor let that *Pluck* you from his *Gates*, which can never *Save* you from his *Wrath*; nor make you any amends for the *Loſs* of your Souls. Let thoſe *Alarms* ſtill ſound in your Ears, 1 *John* 2. 15. *Love not the World, nor the things of the World: If any man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* And *Jam.* 4. 4. *Ye Adulterers and Adultereſſes, Know ye not, that the Friendſhip of the World is Enmity with God? Whoſoever therefore will be the Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God.* If you cannot be ſo *In* with it, but you muſt be *Out* with Him; and you'll turn him, not only *from* you, but all *againſt* you: Take heed, leſt in Reckoning to *Get* all you *Loſe* all. And inſtead of ſuffering the Prayers thus to be *Caſhier'd* and *Routed*; let them be ſet up as the *Barriers* and *Fences*, to keep off the Encroachment: That you be not *ſeized* by the Enemy, and carried away into an *Unredeemable* Captivity.

5. There is the *Enmity againſt God*, which Hinders this Praying to him. The Wicked are all *to pieces* with Heaven; and then theſe Offices of *Friendſhip* are not to be expected from them. They are *by Nature the Children of Wrath*: They brought the Seeds of *Enmity* with them into the World; and the old *Grudge* and *Core* was never yet *Healed*. No, Still the *Quarrel* goes on; and the *Breach* grows but *Wider*. Still they are *Enemies in their Minds*,

Minds, through Evil Works, *Col.* 1. 21. And the Enemies in *Mind* are the *Bitterest* Enemies of all; That have the Malice there *Rooted* at the Bottom. And till they be *Reconciled*, and made better Friends, They will keep off, and have as Little as may be, to do with One, whom they take for their *Enemy*. God's Enemies would not have him to be the *Head* of the Family. No, They have not ſo much *Honour* for him. For tho we cannot bear the *Contempt* and *Affronts* caſt upon our *Friends*; yet we care not how much our *Enemies* are *Vilified* and Deſpis'd: We *Grudge* to pay them any *Honour* our ſelves: and we are not well *pleas'd*, to have them *Admir'd* and *Magnified* by others. Yea further, We Delight in the *Company* and Converſation of our Dear *Friends*. We Love to go to them, and never think it *Long* to be with them. And if your Hearts be Join'd to the Lord, you will not think the *Daily* Prayers come too *Faſt* to bring you to the God of your *Lives*: Or that they make you have *too much* to do with him, whom your *Souls Love*. But one that we do not *Care* for, we are *Strange* to him; and when he comes and *Offers* himſelf, we can have Twenty *Excuſes* to get away, and *Shift* him off. And ſo is God Served by the *Prayerleſs Families*: He is not to their *Mind*; and they do not care for his *Company*. Even a *Godly Man* that does but bear his *Image*, is an *Eye-ſore* to them: They have no *Kindneſs* for him; and how then can ſuch a *Holy* God be for their *Turn*? When it is *Likeneſs* that breeds the *Love*; and *Love* draws all to *Union*. But where there is no manner of *Suitableneſs*, there's like to be ſmall *Dearneſs*. And then where the Friendſhip is *Cold*, the Viſits are but very *Rare* and *Short*; and all but mere *Formality*, nothing *Hearty*. Now ſuch is the Caſe between

tween God and Wicked Men: Who are *Eſtranged from the Womb*; and not only Fallen *from*, but Fallen *out* with him that *Made* them: Full of *Prejudice* againſt him, and Retaining no *Favourable* Opinion of him. And ſo they are *Shy* towards him, and *Liſtleſs* to come near him. They think they have *Better* Friends; and can beſtow themſelves more to their *Content* another way. And therefore are quite off this Courſe: Yea ſo *Far* gone from God, and *Combined* in their *Apoſtacy*, That they ſcarce ſo much as make any Mention of the *Family-Duty*; unleſs it be in the way of Deriſion and *Drollery*, as a Name of *Scorn* and *Infamy*; To *Ridicule* the Tenderneſs of a Neighbour, whoſe Pious *Practice Upbraids* their own Shameful *Neglect*.

Now is not this a Sad and Fearful Conſideration, that may ſtrike you down, and make you *Tremble*; To think that your *Strangeneſs* to God, ariſes from this *Enmity*; and that therefore you are *Prayerleſs*, becauſe *Enemies*? At *Odds* with your Glorious Maker, and up in *Rebellion* againſt the King of Heaven? And then, O what do you mean to do? Will you ſtand it out, and Prepare for *Battel*; and go try *Strength* with the Lord Almighty? Are you for the *Encounter*? And dare you *Reſiſt*, and Venture to Bear the *Shock* of his Indignation? O Sottiſh Creatures! How Unequal is the *Combat*? For a poor frail *Arm of Fleſh* to Fight with Tempeſt, Lightning, and Thunderbolts? For Dry *Stubble* to Maintain its Own, before a *Conſuming Fire*? This can never do your Buſineſs. No *Standing in his Sight, when once he is Angry*. No *Eſcaping* his Hand, when he comes to take *Vengeance*. The *Proudeſt* muſt *Stoop* to him; The *Strongeſt* will *Sink* under him.

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It muſt be another way, that you *Prepare* to Meet your God. And that is, To go and Caſt your ſelves at his *Feet*, and aſſwage his *Wrath* with your *Prayers*; and Beg Pardon and Peace, for his *Son's* Merits. For you will find *Judgment* without Mercy, if you do not make your Peace in this Time of *Mercy*. You will be Torn in *pieces*, when there ſhall be none to *Deliver*, if of the Offended Majeſty himſelf you do not obtain *Deliverance* from this Curſed *Enmity*. *Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at Peace: Thereby Good ſhall come unto thee*, Job 22. 21. Yea *thou ſhalt make thy Prayer to him, and he ſhall hear thee*, ver. 27. That's a Wonderful *Indulgence*; for *Enemies*, who lye all at his *Mercy*, to be admitted to *Parley*. That he will allow you to come, and *Speak* for your ſelves. Yea, that he *puts* you upon this very Courſe: And the Gracious God, (wronged and offended,) *ſeeks* firſt, to have all *Accommodated* and Healed. And will you not then take the *Time*, and the *Offer*, while you may have it? Yea, and when *we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, to be Reconciled unto God?* If ever you will ſhew *Wiſdom*, to do you any Good, ſhew it here: and ſhew it *Quickly*. *Haſten* to your Prayers; and hold not your *Peace*, till the Lord ſpeak *Peace*. And Cry *mightily*, that you may find a perfect Cure of the *Antipathy*. So that from *Abhorring* of God, you may come to *Delight* your ſelves in the Lord.

6. One other Cauſe, (near a-kin to this,) of withholding the Prayers, is *The Love of Sin. When Wickedneſs is ſweet in the Mouth, and* (as a pleaſant Morſel,) *is Hid under the Tongue*, Job 20. 12. Then Prayer is *Unſavoury* and Bitter, and no *acceptable Reliſh* to be found in it. Tho the Pious Soul uſes to fall to it, like an *Epicure* to his

his *Feaſt*: Yet as men grow *full* of their Sins. They fall out of *Conceit* with their *Prayers*. And if they do not *Check* themſelves in the *Wicked* Courſe, They ſhall find a *Check* at the Throne of *Grace*. If you are *Conſcious* of Iniquity *Regarded* in your Hearts, and *Allowed* in your Practice; Then going to the Lord in that *Pickle*, you can expect ſmall *Welcome*, nor any *Deſirable Hearing*. When you go on in your *Treſpaſſes*, you'll be Heartleſs to carry on your *Prayers*. And where the Wickedneſs is become *Delicious*, there the Prayer will grow *Fulſome*. And how can you in earneſt *Pray* againſt the things, which you *Love* above all things? That which makes thee *Abaſh'd* before the Lord, will be apt to Keep thee out of his *Preſence*. When thy doing is ſo *Inconſiſtent* with thy Praying; and thou knoweſt where is the *Stop*, and what is the *Matter*, That God Hides his *Face* from thee, and will have nothing to do with thee, till thou haſt done with the *provoking* thing: Then thou hangeſt *back* from the *Galling* Office; and trieſt to *Divert* and Eaſe thy ſelf another way. And what Heart haſt thou to Seek the *Face* of the Lord, which his Word tells thee is *Againſt them that do Evil*, Pſal. 34. 16. Alas, the Ungodly Wretch has got other *Haunts* than to the Throne of Grace. And what ſhould he do there, who has no *Purity* of *Heart*, nor any *Holy Hands* to Lift up? The way of *Prayer* is utterly *Croſs* to the Courſe of his Life. And to Draw Nigh to the Holy Righteous Lord, does nothing but Upbraid and *Torment* him. He can have neither *Boldneſs* nor *Comfort* there. But finds himſelf *Eaſier* to Stay *away*. And ſo he *withholds* Prayer, as a *Rub* in his Paſſage; that he may go on the more *Clever* and undiſturbed in the purſuit of his *Laſts*.

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I cannot much wonder that a *Wicked* Family, ſhould be a *Prayerleſs* Family. Where their Heads and their Tongues run upon Vanity and Foolery, Pomp and Pride, Faſhions and Dreſſes, Dainties and Exceſſes, the Pot and the Game, Curſing and Swearing, Corrupt Communication, and Diſſolute Converſation, Raking and Tearing for the World, or Brawling and Fighting among themſelves: Such a *Life* and *Prayer*, agree like *Fire* and *Water*. They are Rambling *from* God, and Flying out *againſt* him: And how then can they for *Shame*, ſee one another's Faces *before* him? Their Prayers would look but like a *Jeſt*; and not only a piece of *Formality*, but of *Mockery*.

O Sinner! When thou turneſt thy ſelf looſe, to *walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and the Sight of thy Eyes*: When thou *kickeſt againſt the Pricks*, and breakeſt throw all the *Reſtraints* of Conſcience, to run out after thy Pleaſures and Extravagancies, thy Idols and thy Harlots, a *Wearing* from the Lord: When thou liveſt *Diſhoneſtly* or *Idly*; carrieſt on Baſe Deſigns; and ſcorneſt all Holy Rules: When thou lieſt weltring in *Luſt*, ſwollen with *Pride*, fir'd with *Malice*, eaten up with *Covetouſneſs*: And all thy Sins are in their *Power* upon thee: And nothing but what is *Hateful* to God, is *Dear* to thee: *Does he not ſee thy Ways, and count all thy Steps?* Doſt thou not know he is *aware* of thee? And then with what Face, canſt thou go into his *Preſence*, and take on thee to do any thing at Prayer? In this Caſe, thou art liker to make a *Scoff* at it, than to have any *Serious* Concern in it. And thy Companions that know thee, would but *Laugh* at thee, to hear of ſuch a one as thee, ever offering ſo to *Imploy* thy ſelf. Thou couldſt ſcarce have the *Patience*, but

but to Kneel ſo many *Minutes* at thy *Prayers*, as thou couldſt ſit *Hours* at the *Cards* or the *Drink*. And when thou ſo hardeneſt thy ſelf againſt the Cries of the *Poor*; How canſt thou expect to *find* any Mercy that wilt *ſhew* none. When thou canſt not *Forgive*, but goeſt full of *Vengeance*; thou'lt be afraid of *Curſing* thy ſelf, to go over the Bleſſed *Form*, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we Forgive them*, &c. When thou haſt been ſtretching forth thy Hands to *Iniquity*, and Stealing or Cheating ſticks to thy *Fingers*, what *Hands* are thoſe to lift up in *Prayer*? And what a *Tongue* is that to *Bleſs* God, that ſo commonly breaks out to *Blaſpheme* him? How canſt thou pretend any *Adoration* to the God of *Heaven*, when thou knoweſt, that *thy God is thy Belly*? Yea, how canſt thou expect to be ever the better for that *Praying*, which thou canſt make the Subject of thy *Mocking* and *Jeering*? 'Tis no Imployment for ſuch a *Prophane* Wretch. No, thy very *Praying* is even as much a *Taking of God's Name in Vain* as thy *Swearing*. There's that *Abomination* in thy Heart, which *Cramps* and *Damps* every Petition that comes out of thy Mouth. Thy *Trade* of Life, alas, it ſtops the *Breath*, and Kills the very *Heart* of thy Prayers.

And this is the Reaſon, that many have ſo ſoon enough of their *Prayers*; as not finding the *Exerciſe* to agree with their *Conſtitution*; nor with the drift of their *Converſation*. They will not be at the Pains to *Cleanſe* themſelves; and then they know, as good not *meddle* with the Prayers. Nay, the Enemies of God, which they *Reſet* in their Hearts, will never *abide* it. When it brings the Sins to *Sight*, and is a kind

of *Arraigning* themſelves at the Bar of Heaven; thereſore they *Abſtain* from it, or are ſo very *Sparing* in it; not only for Shame that the Holy things may not *Confound* them; but for dread alſo, leſt they ſhould Raiſe the *Evil Spirit* to *Torment* them.

But will this ſerve the turn? And ſhall they who go on thus perverſely in their ways, ſo *Guard* and Defend themſelves in the *Poſſeſſion* of their Sins? O ſilly, idle Attempt of *Deſperate* Creatures! For all muſt come out. And the Conſcience, which they now ſo *Strangle* and *Provoke*, will one day Return, but with the greater *Force* and *Fury* upon them. 'Tis Vain then to *Cover* your Tranſgreſſion, and think to *hide Iniquity in your Boſom*; or with a high Hand to get the *Maſtery* of your *Convictions*, and make a *League* and Peace with your Sins, that ſhall hold *Inviolable*. For *be ſure they will find you out*. And *for all theſe things, God will bring you into Judgment*. And there is no way for you to *Eſcape* the Danger of them, but roundly to *Judge* yourſelves for them: And if you Seek the Lord, to let theſe go their way. And as ever you would ſee him with *Comfort*; Caſt out the *Curſed* Things that ſet him againſt you. And down with thoſe *Walls* of Separation, that keep you and your *Prayers* from him. And away with the *Boſom* Luſts, and *Darling* Sins, that ſpoil all the *Dearneſs* with Heaven, and that cut off your fair *Correſpondence* Above. O ſee the deſperate Straits into which you run yourſelves, by continuing under the *Love* and *Power* of your Sins. For if ſo you *Hold* to Iniquity, it will certainly be your *Ruin*. And you cannot come out of it, without the Help of your *Prayers*. And yet, alas,

alas, what *Hearty* Prayers can you make against the *Sins*, which you love in your *Hearts*? And let even this, turn your Hearts for ever against those *Sins*, that they blaſt all the *Joy* and *Comfort* of your Lives, and turn you out of the beſt *Refuge* in the World, and make that mighty *Help* of poor Sinners, Inſignificant and *Helpleſs* unto you, by *keeping* you from it, or deſtroying all the *Advantage* you might get by it, and making that Bleſſed *God* the *Terror* of your *Souls*, who ſhould be the only *Joy* of your *Hearts*.

Theſe things conſidered, I hope you will not forſake your *Prayers*, to cleave to your *Sins*. But *Fly* from your Sins, to get ſuch a worthy *Peace* in your Minds, that you may go ſweetly on with your *Prayers*.

And now before I offer any *Advice*, for the *Management* of this Duty, let me ſettle ſome *Preliminaries*, to make the Way for theſe Family-Prayers. And I will propoſe but theſe Two Things: The fixing of ſome *Stated* Times for Prayer: And alſo the *Frequent* Returns of your Prayers. That you may make *Sure* of them, and that you may be as *Often*, as is needful in them.

1. Make Sure of ſome *Stated Times* for Prayer: Though I tie up none to *Canonical* Hours, or to any other *Certain* Hours in particular; yet I would have you to *Fix* upon *ſome* yourſelves. After you have each conſulted your ſeveral *Conveniencies*, for the *fitteſt* Seaſons, which you find to be moſt Proper and Advantageous for the Purpoſe: *Determine* the Time with your-

ſelves, and let your People know, that then you *Expect* their Attendance with you before the Lord. That ſo all may caſt to be *Ready*, and to get all that *Hinders* (as much as they are able) out of the *way*. For the Corrupt Fleſh will be apt to frame many *Evaſions*, to carry you off your *Byaſs*, with other Matters; when you are under no ſuch *Rules*, but only for Praying, when the Spirit *moves*. And if you do not fix upon your *Times*, Nam'd and Appointed, the thing will be in Danger often to be *Forgotten*, and *Thruſt* out, and to *ſlip* and *drop* to the Ground. Thus *tie* yourſelves up then, (where you have not already) and keep as near as you can to the *Set* Times, that nothing (under ſuch unavoidable *Impediments*, as you could not Prevent or Foreſee) may put you *beſide* them: And that none through their *Fault*, nor unleſs upon any Juſt and Needful Account, may be *Wanting*, but *Ready* at Call for the Service. Though I deny not, but Prayer may ſometimes give Place to a *leſs* Work than it ſelf, when it is a *Fit* and *Neceſſary* Work, and ſuch that *cannot* be done another Time, as the Prayer may. Then you may ſtep aſide, ſomewhat out of your Way, to let the *Carriage* go by. But uſe not willingly, and upon *Frivolous* Occaſions, to Break your ſettled *Meaſures*. And when you do, let it be ſo, That they who know you, may perceive, that the *Interruption* is none of your *Pleaſure*, but rather *Pain* and *Grief* to you.

But here I would take upon me ſo far, as to recommend to you the *Morning* and *Evening*; the Beginning and the Cloſe of the Day, as very *In-*

viting Seaſons for your *Prayers*. And ſuch as all the Faithful Servants of God, generally every where throughout the World, have been us'd to make *Choice* of. And that not without very weighty *Reaſons*. Some of which let me here Suggeſt, as *Motives*, encouraging you to be with ſo much *Good* Company.

1. For the *Morning Prayers*. It may well be called the beſt *Beginning*, to Begin with him, who is the Beſt of all *Beings*. To have your *Firſt* Buſineſs with God, is ſuch a *Tincturing* of the Veſſel, as may make it carry a Sweet *Savour* all the Day. After you have been ſo piouſly Taken up with the *Lord*; you'll be the more Meet for an Innocent and Uſeful Converſation with *Men*. When firſt you have been Seeking Directions from *Above*; you'll better know how to Carry yourſelves in all your *Concerns*. *Firſt Fruits* were, of old, *God's* Part. And ſtill we are to *Seek his Kingdom, and the Righteouſneſs thereof, in the firſt place*. And this is one way of Seeking the Lord *Early*; when you Reſolve with that Great and Holy Man, *Pſal.* 5. 3. *My Voice ſhalt thou Hear in the Morning, O Lord. In the Morning will I direct my Prayer to thee, and will look up*. And before you break your *Faſt*, or pour down your Morning's *Draught*, it is fit you ſhould break open your *Minds*, and pour out you *Souls* to God in your *Prayers*.

And this you are to take the more heed of, that the World *Ruſh* not in, to be ſerved before your *God*; and that *Bodily* Occaſions do not get the Start of your *Religion*, ſo that it never *Recover* all the Day. Some Men are *Early* up; but *as* only the *World*, or their Fleſhly *Pleaſure*,

that Rouzes them. They are in *Haſte* to be Buſtling out and gone, before they have asked God's *Leave*, or taken Him along *with* them. Inſtead of Calling upon the *Lord*, and firſt of all *Securing* the Service of God: As ſoon as up, they are Calling upon their People, and Spurring them on to the Service of *Mammon*; to make *Haſte*, and do this and that *before*. But not a word of the thing that is moſt *Needful* of all to be done. O what *Prepoſterous* Doing is here? The Attendance on the *Vile* Body, to exclude all Care of the *precious* Soul! *Earth* to be ſet above *Heaven!* And any paltry *Trifle*, and periſhing *Traſh*, to take Place of Immortal *Glory*, and the *God* Bleſſed for ever! To run away with all Speed in the *Morning*, without *Him*, that has brought you to it; as if you had no *Dependance* upon him, nor he any *Title* to you.

Again, I would engage you to your *Morning* Devotions, even for the *Decency* of the thing. And to make ſome handſome grateful *Returns* to your Great Preſerver, who has brought you out of your *Sleep*, as out of the Hands of *Death*; and rais'd you from your *Beds*, as from your *Graves*; and let you ſee a New *Light*, like a Reſurrection to another *Life*: O can you chuſe but ſay, with his approved Servant, *Pſalm* 139. 18. *When I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* As ſoon as I *Open* my Eyes, I cannot but *Lift* them up to the Lord, from whom comes all my Safety, and my continual Supply. For that *I laid me down and Slept, and Awaked again*; What was it, but *becauſe the Lord ſuſtained me? Pſalm* 3. 5. Who did *keep* you in your Sleep, when you were in no *Capacity* to *Look* to your ſelves? Who ſecur'd you

you from *Dangers*, and Refreſh'd you with a comfortable *Reſt*? And is it not worth your Notice and Acknowledgment? And will you give him no *Thanks* and *Praiſe* for it? O let even common *Ingenuity* extort from you the *Morning* Sacrifice. And launch not forth into the *Buſineſs* of another Day, Before you have paid your humble Devotions, for the *Protection*, and the *Repoſe* of the laſt Night.

Yet further, Let me urge the *Neceſſity*, as well as Decency of this Duty. If ever you would be *ſafe*, and *Do Well*, Do not *Venture* out in the Morning without this *Guard* and Defence of your *Prayers* about you. For your Souls to go thus *Undreſs'd* and *Unbleſs'd* into the world, 'tis worſe than for your Bodies to ſet out *Naked* in the *Sharpeſt* Seaſon. You know not what you do, So to *Expoſe* your ſelves. You know not what *Temptations* and *Perils* you ſhall meet with; nor what is near you, or juſt hanging over you: In ſuch an *Evil* Dangerous World, wherein you Live, Beſet with ſuch a Mighty and Deadly *Enemy*; that is ſtill watching and plotting for your *Miſchief* and *Ruin*: And when you are ſo weak and *Inſufficient*, to maintain either your *Integrity* or your *Safety*; and 'tis as much as you can do, with all your Prayers, to *ſecure* your ſelves. O what will become of you then, if you get not under the Shelter of the *Almighty*? If you Engage not his Aid in your *Defence*? You are never out of *Harms* way, when *out* with God. However you may *Fancy* your ſelves ſafe and well enough, even under the *Devil's* Power: (For ſo he will ſeek to Humour you, into your own Undoing:) All your

Security and Proſperity then, Alas, it is but a *Dream* and Imagination; when you are out of God's *Hands*; and will not by Prayer, commit your ſelves to his *Tuition*. That which looks for your *Welfare* then will prove but a *Trap*: And even the things in which you *Applaud* your ſelves, as *Beſt* for you, will turn to your *Downfall* and Ruin.

Once more,

You have as much Need of your *Morning-Prayers*, as you have of the *Bleſſing* of God upon all your Deſigns and Labours of the *Day*. For how *Vain is it, To Riſe Early, and Sit up Late, and Eat the Bread of Carefulneſs and Sorrow*, Pſal. 127. 2. If the Lord do not give *Succeſs*, and make your Endeavours *Proſperous*? The beſt *Contrivance*, and the greateſt *Pains* will never do, without his Favour and gracious *Influence*. All your *Planting and Watering* will ſignify nothing, *If he do not give the Increaſe*, 1 Cor. 3. 7. You may Plough and Sow, and Reap the *Wind*; If the kindly Bleſſing of *Heaven* do not Rear up, and Ripen and Perfect the Fruits of the *Earth*. You may Reckon all *Sure*, and Fear nothing to hinder the *Succeſs*; and yet ſomewhat be *Latent*, out of your reach to Diſcern; that ſhall *Blaſt* and Spoil all. So that you have not only need every Morning, To ask your *Daily Bread*; But a *Daily Bleſſing* upon that Bread, to make it Bread *indeed*, Fit to Nouriſh and do you Good. And if you are ſo Intent upon the *Buſineſs*, or in ſuch Haſte for your *Journeys*; that you cannot *ſtay* for Prayers; But count that much Time *Loſt*, which is ſo Beſtowed: You will make too much *Haſte* for the Good *Speed*; and come to know at Laſt, That Prayer never

Hin-

Hinder'd any Good and fitting work; But is the Beſt Means in the world, to make it *Proſperous*. And whatever *ſeeming* Succeſs you found; as good you had never had it, if by your Prayers you did not *Seek* or *Sanctify* it. O then *Begin* all your Works in God's Holy *Name*; and let your *Prayers* go before your *Labours*. And never think that all your *other* Striving will do greater matters, than this Striving with God for the *Bleſſing*. Nor think to *Snatch* it out of God's Hands, and work it out your ſelves, whether *He* will or no: But before you Engage in the *Work* of the Day, Stay to Engage and Pray him into your *Intereſts*. And inſtead of fearing any *Damage* by this Courſe, Expect to Fare the *Better* all Day Long, for your *Morning* Devotions.

2. If you Plead, That ſuch are your *Occaſions*, your Family uſes to be *ſcattered* in the *Morning*: And one is Up and *gone*: Another *Engaged* this way, another taken up in that *Buſineſs*: So that you cannot have them together, to make any thing of the *Morning-Prayer*. (Though I doubt not, but you might order your Affairs, for the common *prevention* of this; were you indeed *Lovers* of God; *Zealous* for the Service, and full of Concern to Promote it: Peradventure you might amend the matter, by going to it a little *Sooner*, or ſtaying ſomewhat *Later*: Yet) in the *Evening* this *Excuſe* is out of the way. For then you are uſually *all together*. And as you Joyn in a *Body* to Sit and Converſe, and Eat and Talk together: So why you ſhould not Joyn together upon the *Beſt* and moſt *Needful* Account

of all, I know nothing to Hinder, but your own *Falſe* Hearts, and *Earthly* Minds, *Contempt* of God, and *Diſaffection* to his Holy things. And if one Steals to *Bed* before Prayer-time, and this and the other *Run* out, and find themſelves *other* Employment: It is thy *Fault*, as a *Maſter*, that thou doſt not uſe thy Authority, to *Oblige* them to better Attendance: And ſee that ye take this fair *Leave* of one another, before you part; to call upon the *Lord* with one Conſent, and *Magnify his Name together*. That you may not only in a Formality, ſay, *Good Night*; but have good Reaſon to *Hope* it: And be like indeed to find Souls-Reſt in your *God*, as well as the Bodily Reſt in your *Beds*: And not go away with *Regret* of Conſcience, for making your Beds your Lurking Holes; where to *Hide* from the Lord and *Out-run* your Duty.

Again, If you have *Forgot* your ſelves, in the *Hurry* of the Day: At Night is the Time of *Recollection*, to call your ſelves to Account, and go *Humble* your ſelves to the Majeſty *Offended*; And beg his merciful *Pardon* in Chriſt Jeſus, for all that you have carelеſly *Omitted*, or wickedly *Committed*, the Paſt Day. For *who Can underſtand his Errors*. Or know how oft he Offendeth. O! which of you can tell how *Frequently* you Fail and *Break* with God, in your Thoughts, Words and Deeds, every *Day*, every hour. And if you would Lye down in *Peace*, and find your Sleep truly *Sweet*; It concerns you firſt to Seek *God's* Peace, and earneſtly to *Sue* for Pardon. That you may find him *Reconciled*, before you enter the *Regions* of the ſhadow of *Death*:

Death: And not go into your *Beds* with all the heavy Load of the Day's *Sins* upon your *Souls*; For ought you know, Ere next Morning, to *ſink* you down, too Low for any more Riſing.

And that is yet a further Engagement to your *Evening Prayers*, That you may be Defended from all the *Dangers* and *Terrors* of the Night. Not only from Fire and Thieves, but from the *Wrath* of God, and the *Inſurſions* of Devils. That the Bleſſed Keeper of *Iſrael* may watch over you; when you are not in a Condition to take *Care* of your ſelves: And that you may be Preſerved ſafe, under the ſhadow of his *Wings*. For O how many have gone to Bed *well*, and ſlept their *Laſt*? And from their *Beds*, been Carried to lye in the *Duſt*; Never to *Wake* again, till the great Morning of the *Laſt* Day? And what Aſſurance has any of you, but when you go into your Chambers, you from thence immediately go down to the Chambers of *Death*? How do you know, but *this Night your Souls may be required of you*? How do you know but it ſhall be the *Laſt* Leave that ever you will take of one another? And would not you Labour hard with God in your Prayers, If you were ſure not to Riſe and Live *another* Day? And had you not beſt then be in as good *Earneſt*; Becauſe you have no *Certainty*, but ſo it may prove? And let me tell you, ye are *Fool-hardy*, and throw a *deſperate* Caſt for Eternity; To leap into your *Beds*, before you go to your *Prayers*. And as you ſhould be greatly *Aſhamed*, to be ſuch Brutes, ſo you ſhould be as much *Afraid* to run

ſuch

ſuch *Hazards*. And before you commit your Bodies to the *Brother of Death*, Commend your Spirits to the God of your *Life*. And go to your *Beds*, even as to your *Graves*. And then before you *lye* Down, you will think it Good to *Kneel* Down: And never Omit to make this one of your *Prayer Times*.

But whatever be your *Hours* of Prayer,

2. Take care of the *Frequent Returns* of your Prayers. That you may be at them *Daily*, and apply your ſelves to them, as oft as is *Neceſſary*. If you keep not juſt to ſuch and ſuch *Times*, nor to Solemn Prayers exactly ſo *many* Times: Yet get ſuch an humble Senſe of your *Wants*; and ſuch an high Eſteem of the Bleſſed *Freedom* with God; That you need not be *Spurred*, to catch all the fit *Opportunities* for it: Nor ever run into ſuch common Neglects, and long *Strangeneſs* to God; Till you are *Overgrown* with your Sins; and give Satan even all the *Advantage* he could wiſh, againſt your *Souls*. Yea and ſhewing that you have no Regard of that holy *Religion*, whereof you make *Profeſſion*. For though ſome (no leſs *Silly* than *Prophane*) are forward to call *Hypocrite*, when they ſee a man much *Addicted* to his Prayers; Yet a much more *Competent* Judge, *Job* 27. 10. makes the *Rarity* to be a Badge of *Hypocriſy*. *Will the Hipocrite Delight himſelf in the Almighty? Will he Always Call upon God?* No, But if he *Begin* with it, and *Offer* a little at it, and carry it on for ſome *Small* Time, upon ſome *Unuſual* Account: Yet he'll ſoon have *Enough* of it: and Flag, and fall *Back*, and let it alone; As nothing *Agreeable*, either with the frame of his *Spirit*,

or

or the Tenor of his *Life*. He is for another *ſort* of Company and Converſation, Than to be Much with *God*, and ſerve him, like *Anna*, Luk. 2. 37. *with Prayers Night and Day.*

Some Families are for Prayers only on the *Lord's-Day* at Night; and then the Lord ſhall have no more of them for a *Week*. They'll not come near him, till that Day *Sennight* again. But do not make ſuch Fearful *Chaſms* and *Interruptions*, I beſeech you. For *every* Day is the *Lord's*-Day; and a Day of *Audience*, and a *Prayer*-Day; wherein your Heavenly Father *Expects* you: And wherein you (I am ſure,) do full as much *Need* Him. And count it as *Strange* and Unuſual with you, to *Suſpend* your Prayers, as your Meals: Yea to have your Prayers at a *Stand*, as to have your Breath *ſtopt*: For Prayer is the very *Breath* of Religion; without which it is *ſuffocated* and ſtifled, and cannot be kept *Alive*, in the *Family*, or in the *Soul*.

Nor let the Lord only Hear of you at the *Pinch* and *Extremity*; when nothing but mere *Dread* forces you upon it. Leſt you find the ſad *Diſappointment*, of Beginning an *Acquaintance* then; and ſeek in *Vain*, becauſe you would not ſeek *Before*. But let Prayer be moe in *Faſhion* with you, and more *Common* among you. Be Ready to it, and Much in it: Till you have made you a *Frequented* Eaſy Path to the Throne of Grace. Let it be even as the *Air*, that you Breathe in; and as the *Food* that you Live on; and as the very *Pulſe* of your Souls. Carried on even *without Ceaſing*, 1 Theſ. 5. 17. *i. e.* Keep in a Conſtant *Preparation* for it; and be Ready, upon all Occaſions, to fall into

into the *Actual* Exerciſe of it. That it may not be as a *Prodigious* thing to you; but an *Every Day*'s Buſineſs, and *Familiar*, even as your Eating and Drinking.

Now to Quicken you to ſuch *Frequency* of Prayer, Do but Conſider with me Three Things; That this is the *Only* Time for it: That the *Oftner* you thus come to God, you ſhall be the *Welcomer*: And that your Prayer, the more *Frequent*, is the more *Excellent*.

1. Conſider, That this is the *Only Time*. The Time of Reaching out the *Scepter*, to Invite the *Petitioner*. The *Finding-While*, to Obtain Mercy. When Mercy's Arms are *Extended*, to Receive the Humbled, Yielding *Sinner*. But it is but a *While*; and O how *Short* a While! Even as *Nothing*, to the Vaſt *Infinite* Duration, in which you muſt take up *For ever and ever*. Can you think much then of your *Daily Prayers*? Or think more than *Once* a Day too much, To Beg and *Importune* the God of Heaven, to have Mercy upon your poor ſinful *Departing* Souls; to vouchſafe ſome Tokens of his *Love* unto you; and to beſtow the Riches of his Saving *Grace* upon you; before you go hence, and be no more *Seen*, nor *Heard* among the Living? Does the Lord allow you now to *Aſk*, *Seek*, and *Knock*? Does he by his Command, *Oblige* you to it? And by his Promiſe of the happy Succeſs, *Encourage* you in it? And yet you are Careleſs and Liſtleſs, to make your *Benefit* of it, while *Time* ſerves you for it? O that you would *Open* your Eyes, and ſee the Gracious *Day* that yet ſhines upon you! And ſo well underſtand your ſelves,

as

as to perceive, That it is no *hard Put* upon you, but a *Singular Favour* offer'd unto you. When you are Solicited, to make your Frequent *Addreſſes* to the Father of Mercies: That you may find his *Mercy to Eternal Life*; Find it, in the Time of this *Mortal Life*. O could the Damned *Pray* themſelves out of *Hell*, How *Hard* would they be at it? How *Inceſſantly* upon it? And if by thy *Prayers*, Thou may'ſt keep thy ſelf from ever *Coming* there; O how well would all the *Pains* and *Expence* be laid out, though thou ſhouldſt waſte thy *Lungs*, and wear out thy *Knees*, in Crying Day and Night, to be *Delivered from God's Wrath and Everlaſting Damnation*.

O will you then *Know* the Time of your *Viſitation*? And if you Know it, *Uſe* it, while you have it. And let this be as the *Goad*, to prick you forwards, ever and anon to *Renew* your Prayers: To be at them again and again; and ſtill *Perſiſt* in them, and never have done with them, till your *Life* is Run out, and all your *Danger* is over. O Uſe your ſelves now to Cry in *Time*; that at Laſt you may not Cry in *Vain*. Now *Follow* your Prayers, that then you may not *Loſe* your Prayers. For if you do not *Begin* them, till juſt your Time is *Ending*; even as good you had *never* begun them. O how many that now might Pray, and *Would not*, may then find, that though they would Pray, they *Cannot*? Yea though (after a ſort,) then they do *Pray*, there will be none to *Regard* their Prayers. According to that terrifying Denunciation, Prov. 1. 28. *Then ſhall they Call to me, but I will not Anſwer. They ſhall Seek me Early; but they ſhall not Find me.* But now you may

Prevent

Prevent the Killing *Fruſtration*: And if you let the Lord often Hear of you, in *Your Day*; you are like to have a Comfortable Hearing with him, in *His Day*. And it is the Conſcientious Courſe of your Conſtant Praying *Every Day*, that will give you good Hopes of Solid and Everlaſting Conſolation, in your *Dying-Day*. And therefore now *Give* your ſelves to it, and be *Often* in it, that then you may Reap all the Sweet and Bleſſed *Fruits* of it.

2. Let it Hearten you on to ſuch *Frequency* of Communion with God, That the *Oftner* you ſo come to Him, the *Welcomer* you ſhall be with Him. For he is not *Weary* of Hearing, nor *Impoveriſh'd* with Granting; as Men uſe to be *Sick* of Bold Laviſh *Petitioners*, and give them not only a *Repulſe*, but a *Rebuke:* Upbraiding them with Want of *Manners*, as much as any other *Wants* they complain of. But the Opening of our Mouths *Wide*, has the Promiſe of God's *filling* them. And the moſt Importunate *Beggars* are his biggeſt *Favourites*. He is (as our *Church* expreſſes it) *always more Ready to Hear, than we to Pray*. And beſt *pleaſed* with thoſe, by whom his Gates are moſt *Frequented*: And though we have ſomething to ſay to him, not only *Daniel*'s *Three* times a Day, but *David*'s *Seven* times a Day; yea though it ſhould come up to the *Seventy* times Seven; He would never be *Tir'd* with the *Repeated* Cries; nor Frown upon the *Endleſs* asking. But would *Delight* in you, ſo *Delighting* your ſelves in the Lord; and like the Better of you, for ſhewing that Greateſt of all Wiſdom; in coming ſtill to Draw out of his *Infinite* Fulneſs; with whom is not only the All-ſufficient *Ability*,

Ability, to do for you, whatever you can deſire; but as great an *Inclination* and Pleaſure to do it. And your *Much-asking*, is not to make him the more *Willing* to Give, but you the *Fitter* to Receive. When you ſhew the mighty *Value* which you have for his *Favours*, that you know how to *Prize* them, and think no Waiting and Begging too much, that you may *Prevail* and *Speed* at the laſt.

3. Be not aſhamed of coming ſo often, nor fall into diſlike of your Prayers, for being ſo *Many*. When here the *Oftener* the *Better*; and Prayer the more *Frequent*, the more *Excellent*. Though ſome ſpeak of *Common-Prayer*, as a Name bearing a Sound of *Contempt*. Prayer indeed ought to be *Common*, even as our *Needs* are. And the *Commonneſs* is its *Commendation*. For the beſt and moſt needful things in Nature, are moſt common; as the Sun and Air, Fire and Water. And you muſt not think that your Prayers ſhall be more *Eſteem'd*, for being ſeldom *Heard*: As ſome *Princes* think to raiſe their Eſteem, by being ſeldom *Seen*. The Offices will not grow more Rare and *Worthy*, becauſe more Rare and *Unuſual*. For here the *Wealth* lies in the vaſt numberleſs *Sums*, that make up the *Treaſure*. And this ſpeaks not only your *Riches*, but your *Honour*, that your are got into the beſt of all *Correſpondence*, Clad and Adorn'd with theſe coſtlieſt of all *Suits*, (the Suits of *Prayers*) even for your Every-day's Dreſs: So *Habituated* to your Prayers, and in Love with them: So us'd to the *Preſence* of Majeſty, even the higheſt: So Great and *Intimate* with Heaven, as there to have your main *Traffick* and Converſation, and to be even All together ſo *Taken up*.

Now,

Now, after all this *Excitation* to the Family-Prayer. There ſhould be ſome *Direction* for the *Management* of it. That is a New and Great Subject, which deſerves Enlargement upon it by a *better* Hand. But as it is not my preſent Buſineſs, ſo my Shou'ders *Skrink* at the Undertaking. Yet now my Hand is in, ſomewhat I muſt *Adventure* upon it, that all my Deſign may not be *Loſt*. For to what purpoſe, to *Ring* the Company in, and tell them nothing what to do there? Though I ſet about the Work then with ſome *Reluctance*, as conſcious of my own Inſufficiency, here to Inſtruct the World; and ſhall be glad to be *Aſſiſted* in this my ſelf, by ſuch as are able to help me out, and would Teach me and others, not only from the *Notions* of their Heads, but from the *Experience* of their Hearts. Yet in the mean time, I ſhall hope they will be favourable to my *Intention*, and forgive the Advice, which is *Below* their own Regard: Turning it over to others, that can pick any *Benefit* out of it.

1. To begin with ſome whoſe *Superiority* minds me to wait upon them firſt. If thou art not thy own *Chaplain* in the Houſe; but haſt a *Subſtitute*, to *Officiate* for thee; do not ſo turn it over to him, as to turn thy ſelf out of the *Communion*. Nor by turning thy own *Back* upon the Worſhip of God, make it Suſpitious, that thou art *Aſham'd* to be *Seen* in it; or thinkeſt thou canſt *Better* beſtow thy ſelf elſewhere the while, than to come and meddle with it. That though, for certain Reaſons, thou doſt *Suffer* it; yet for the Thing it ſelf, thou

thou doſt not *Deſire* it. Though thou wilt vouchſafe it a Room in thy *Family*, it ſhall rather have thy *Room* than thy *Company*. And thus thou ſeemeſt to bring it into thy *Houſe*; only that thou maiſt have Occaſion to Expoſe it to more *Contempt*, than if thou didſt quite turn it out. For in ſo doing, thou wouldſt give but one great *Inſtance* of thy *Abhorrence*; which by the cuſtomary Neglect, might grow to be leſs *Obſerved*. Whereas now even every Day, thou *Reneweſt* the viſible Proofs of thy *Scorn*; when it is ſo *Nigh* thee, and yet thou wilt *Abſcond*, and get out of the way to *Save* thy ſelf from it. Leaving the *Inferior* Sort, as good enough, to go through that *Drudgery*. But to *Invite* thee in to thy *own* Prayers, (which is the Deſign of this Advice) that they may be indeed *Thine*, and not only the Prayers of thy *Family*: Whoever thou art, and how Great ſoever be thy *Poſt* and *Quality* in the World, let me make bold to tell thee, That the Prayers would much more Honour *Thee*, than ever thou canſt Honour the *Prayers*. The Greateſt *Kings* in the World (if any of the *Beſt*) have more Gloried in paying this Service to the King of *Heaven*, than in Receiving the beſt Service of all their Subjects on *Earth*. Nay, I muſt tell thee, Thou art more *Obliged* to the Attendance, than any of the Reſt; that thou maiſt not bring it down to be *Baſe*, with all the Reſt; yea, and tempt ſome to *ſlight* it, even for the *Pride*, to be in thy Faſhion.

O then let it have not only thy bare *Allowance*, but thy *Preſence*, and thy *Countenance*, and thy *Inſpection* and Care, to ſee that all be Preſent at it, and Decent in it. And as thou art the *Head*, ſo

ſo ſhew thy *Headſhip* here: And be the Firſt and *Chief* to Lead up all the *Company* to the Throne of Grace, and *Preſent* them before the Lord. Yea, and take that for a much more *Glorious* Office, than any thou canſt bear in the *Court*, or the *Camp*.

Nor think it enough, there to *ſhew* thy ſelf among them, but fall down and *Worſhip* at the Footſtool of thy Glorious Maker and Judge Eternal, even *as one of them*. Lay aſide then all the Thoughts of thy *Greatneſs* and *Pre-eminence* above them: And take thy ſelf there to be upon the ſame *Terms* as they, and no bigger than the *leaſt*, before the Bleſſed God moſt *High* and *Great* above all. Yea, let thy *Example* ſhine ſo Bright before them, that looking upon Thee, they may ſee how to Worſhip God, and learn to be all Humility, and Reverence, and Devotion, and Fervency in the Work of the Lord. And then thou wilt think thy ſelf equally concern'd, as they or any, in the following Words of *Remembrance* and *Advice*.

2. Look narrowly to your *Aims* and *Deſigns* in the Worſhip: For what *Reaſons*, and to what *Ends* you ſet about it. That it be not only to Rock Conſcience a little *Aſleep*, and make you think *well* of yourſelves in a wretched *Damnable* Caſe; or to *Compound* for your Sins, and bear you out in an *Ill* Courſe: That it be not only to pay a *Due* to *Cuſtom*, and to eſcape the Common *Odium*: That it be not for *Fear* of this Man; Or to *Recommend* yourſelves to another: Or to get you a *Name*, or a good Word; *to be ſeen of Men*, or to make a *ſhew* in the World. Though (in a *Cold* Age, that ſo wants *Flagrant* Examples

Examples) you may be *willing*, That Men ſhould *know* it, to be Edified by it: And when it is not to Glorify *you*, but your *Father* in Heaven. Yet take heed you do not make their *Seeing*, the ultimate *End* of your doing it. But let it be done in the *Conſcience* of your *Duty*; and as the *Means* of your *Felicity*. Let your Intention be the *Glory* of God, and the everlaſting *Advantage* of your Souls: To ſhape them into a nearer *Reſemblance* of him, and to bring you into a better *Acquaintance* with him. And uſe your Prayers as the *Steps* of Aſcention to raiſe you up to him; and as the *Way* wherein he has appointed you to wait for *Grace* from him. See that you go to Him, as your only Bleſſed *End* and *Reſt*, becauſe you *Thirſt* after him, and cannot be ſatisfied without him: And therefore *Seek* him, that you may *know* more, and *have* more of him: That you may *ſee his Power and his Glory, ſo as you have ſeen him in the Sanctuary*: And may perceive ſtill more of the *Strengthening* and *Reviving*, which you have found upon this way, till from ſuch *Glimpſes*, you reach at laſt, to the *Fulneſs* of this Heavenly Light.

3. Remember what a *Preſence* you are entring into, when going to your *Prayers*, and drawing nigh to *God*. Though you are never out of his Sight; yet then place yourſelves as *directly* under his Eye, and ſurrounded with the Glory of the Lord. As *Daniel* worſhipped *Before his God. Chap.* 6. 10. So do it *Heartily as to the Lord. Seek the Lord, and Seek his Face, Pſalm* 105. 4. As if you were ſpeaking to your *Sovereign Face to Face*. Pour not out Words, without minding the *Majeſty*, with whom you have to do. Leſt

the Lord *Capitulate* with you, as he did with thoſe, *Zech.* 7. 5. *Did ye at all do it to me? Even to me?* You had ſome one elſe in your Eye; and other Matters in your *Mind*. And That was in your *Mouths*, was leaſt Regarded in your *Hearts*. O How Few indeed *Draw Nigh* to God, even when they *Seem* to do it? And how many Prayers are *Loſt* by the way, that never Reach to him? Becauſe, alas, They did not ſo much as *Aim* at him. And even in the midſt of all their *Prayers*, God was not in all their *Thoughts*. O take heed that your Prayers be not ſuch *Mock-Prayers*: Which have not God *preſent* with you, for the Glorious *Object*, to whom they are Preſented. But Look upon Him, as juſt *Before* you, and on every *Side*, Round about you. That your Prayer may be the *Aſcending* of your Hearts; and a Dealing and Converſing *Immediately* with him. That you may not take ſo much Notice of any thing that ſtrikes upon your *Senſe*, as of the Great God that Searches your *Hearts*; and overlook all the *Company*, to Lift up your Eyes to him *that Dwelleth in the Heavens*. And as the *Eyes of Servants Look to the Hand of their Maſters; and as the Eyes of a Maiden to the Hand of her Miſtreſs; So let your Eyes Wait upon the Lord your God, till he have Mercy upon you*, Pſal. 123. 1, 2. Yea, Liſt up your *Hearts*, together with your *Eyes*, for his Bleſſing and Direction, his Aſſiſtance, and Acceptance, in that great Work you are upon. And if, in the Beginning of your Worſhip, you do not always make ſuch an *Addreſs*, with your *Mouths*, yet never Forget to do it within your *Hearts*. That you may find Him who is with you, *Preſent*, in ſuch ſweet and

and joyful *Effects*, as ſhall be like a Beginning of *Heaven* to you.

4. Though I muſt not *Impoſe* it, yet I cannot chuſe but much Approve and *Recommend* it, That before your *Solemn* Prayers, you would *Read* and Conſider ſome Portion of the *Holy Scriptures*. To Hear what *God* ſays unto you, Before you *Speak* unto God. For this is not only a Decent *Preface*, but an Excellent *Preparative* to Prayer: Thus to *Gather* in your Thoughts, and *Compoſe* your Minds, to Wait and Attend upon the Lord. And thoſe *Families* that are much Concern'd in the *World*, have the greater *Need* of this Means; To Excite and Engage them to the *Worſhip* of God; By Hearing of ſomewhat juſt from the *Word* of God. *He that turneth away his Ear, from Hearing the Law, even his Prayer ſhall be Abomination*, Prov. 28 9. Though I quote not that Text, to prove it a *Duty*, ſtill to Uſe ſuch *Reading* before our *Praying*: (when the Meaning is, that an ill *Practice* will ſpoil even the beſt *Prayers*.) Yet we ſeem then to ſtand the *Fairer*, for a deſirable Hearing with the *Lord*: When we are firſt *Inquiſitive* and Attentive to Hear what he ſays to our *Souls*. And you can hardly Read a *Pſalm*, or a *Chapter*, with Deliberation, and Serious *Pauſing* upon it, (as all Holy Scripture ought to be Read,) but it will *Suggeſt* ſome Thoughts and Reflections, that may prove of mighty Uſe, and Advantage, to *Quicken* and *Promote* your Prayers.

5. I would not only adviſe, but earneſtly exhort you to a Profound *Reverence* in the Worſhip

ſhip of God: And ſuch an *Awful* Carriage in his Preſence; as may ſhew you to *Pray with Underſtanding*; and to Know *Where* you are, and to *Whom* you Addreſs. For it is another thing to *Negotiate* with the God of *Heaven*; than to go and ſpeak to the *Greateſt* Prince upon Earth. And if the Glorious Powers *Above* throw down their *Crowns*, and *Shrink* up themſelves, before his *Throne*: O how can deſpicable *Worms* here ever *Abaſe* themſelves Low enough at the Feet of ſuch a Holy Incomprehenſible *Majeſty*? And they that will Dare to *play* with this *Conſuming Fire*, may Dread to be made *Duſt and Aſhes*, in the Saddeſt Acceptation. His Name is not only *Glorious*, but *Fearful*. Deut. 28. 58. *This Glorious and Fearful Name, The Lord thy God.* He makes not only the *Earth*, and the *Devils*, but even his holy *Servants*, and the *Pillars* of Heaven *Tremble*. So Great and Good a man as *David*, was not aſham'd to Confeſs, Pſal. 119. 120. *My Fleſh Trembles for Fear of Thee; and I am Afraid of thy Judgments.* O the Madneſs then of *Deſperate* Sinners, that can make as Bold as their *Liſt*, with ſuch a *King*, of Unlimited Power and Glory! The Lord Open their Eyes; For *they know not what they do.* But let the *Biggeſt* in the World learn to be *Wiſer*. As they are taught, Pſal. 2. 11. And *Serve the Lord with Reverence and Godly Fear.* And let me apply that for thy Admonition, *proud* Sinner! Pſal. 114. 7. *Tremble thou Earth, at the preſence of the Lord: At the preſence of the God of Jacob.* For Alas, What art thou, but a Piece of Weak, Vile *Earth*? And thou may'ſt exceedingly *Fear* and *Quake*, to think how *Stiff* and *Stubborn* thou haſt been with the Almighty Majeſty of *Heaven*.

And

And because nothing so Low abases us, as the Sense of *Sin*; The more therefore to Heighten that *Sense*, Be more Free and Full in *Confessing* of your Sins, and *Impleading* your selves. And forbear not to tell even all the *Worst*. For such Doleful *Accents* issue in *Joyful* Accounts. The plentiful *Showers* produce fruitful *Crops*, *Psalm* 32. 5. *I said I will Confess my Transgressions to the Lord: And thou forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin.* And though he *Mourn'd in his Complaint, and made a Noise*, Psalm 55. 2. Yet he Comforted himself, Psalm 6. 8. *The Lord has heard the Voice of my Weeping*; *q. d.* He gave more regard to the *Groans* and *Tears*, than to the *Words* and *Phrases*. Be not *sparing* then to Confess, if you would have the Lord *abundantly* to Pardon. Yet here, not only your Prudence, but Necessity must set *Bounds*. For if you think you must *Tell All*, you will *never* have done. Do then what you can: And like poor *Debtors*, that use to pay some *one* Time, and some *another*. And then think you have done it to some *purpose*, when you have but confest enough, to *Pierce* your Hearts, and to pull *down* your Souls.

But because many may pretend to the Reverence *within*, which they do not make *Appear*, and deny us to Judge of their *Hearts*: Therefore leaving to every one the Care of Humbling their *Souls* before the Lord: Let me call upon you all, to make the *outward* Signification of this inward Reverence, in your *Family Worship*. That the Quietness and Gravity of your Carriage, the Seriousness of your Countenance, the *Lifting* up of your Hands and Eyes, the Bending your Knees, the Working

of your Sighs and Groans, and ſuch Fit and Decent *Expreſſions*, may tell the Company, That you have a due *Regard* of what you are about. For there are *Rude* Creatures, whoſe Preſence at the Worſhip is only a *Nuſance* to the reſt. Either *Wriggling* in a reſtleſs manner, to ſhew how *Uneaſy* they are in the Service; or *Staring* idly about them, to let us ſee that they mind nothing leſs than the *Eye* of Heaven; or uſing ſuch wanton *Trifling* Actions, as ſeem to make but a *Game* of the moſt *Solemn* Buſineſs: And either Gaping and Yawning over it, or Blowing their Noſes, or Raking their Throats, and throwing out their Spittle, as it were in *Scorn* and *Defiance* of the Prayers. One would think, a little *Good Manners* here, without any thing of a *Religious Principle*, might reach them to Correct ſuch *Diſorders*: And not to be ſeen in the Worſhip with ſuch an Air of Contempt and Irreverence, as only to offer the ſouleſt *Indignity* to it.

Though I confeſs, That the Humbling of the *Hearts*, and the Abaſing of our *Souls* within us, is the main of our *Subjection* to the Father of *Spirits*: And he loaths the *Hail-Maſter*, where the Knee is bowed in *Mockery*: He Scorns the *Lip-Labour*, the Formal *Cringing*, and all the *Bodily* Exerciſe of Empty *Fops*, that have no *Internal* Spring of Devotion, no *Broken* Spirits; nor Souls that have gone under the Work of a Serious *Humiliation*. Yet that Lowlineſs and Reverence *within*, will uſually be expreſt *Abroad*: And the Humble Heart will alſo pull down the *Knees*. And as long as you have *Bodies* to attend your *Souls* in the Service of *God*; 'tis fit you ſhould make them *know* themſelves,

and

and obſerve their *Diſtance*. And remember ſome *Difference* between ſpeaking to the Supreme Eternal *God*, and ſpeaking to any Mortal *Man* upon Earth. And never think you can too much *Abaſe* yourſelves, before the Omnipotent *Maker* of the World, the Tremendous *Judge* of Quick and Dead. That the *Self-diminiſhing* Poſtures may do you this Kindneſs, to mind you of the Infinite *Diſproportion* between you, and the God whom you *Worſhip*; and to Preach to you that deep *Humility*, which is the ſure and ready *Way* of riſing to Honour and *Glory*. Yet,

6. At the ſame time you remember your *Diſtance*, that you may not forget your *Privilege*; nor let your *Reverence* of God ſwallow up, and devour all your *Delight* in him, endeavour to make your Devotions *Eaſy* and *Pleaſant*. Not a Harſh and Grievous *Task*, but a ſweet Heavenly *Entertainment*, and a Labour only of Love. And this you may do, by going to the Lord, as *your God*; by Offering all your Worſhip in the *Name of Jeſus*; and to your Prayers, joyning your *Thanks* and *Praiſes*.

1. Sweeten your Devotions, by having Recourſe to the Lord, as *your God*. One to whom you bear a near *Relation*. And in whom you have an Eſpecial *Intereſt*. And therefore may be bold to cry, *Abba Father*: and confident to find a kind *Welcome*. It was ſaid of the Renowned Emperor *Auguſtus*, (in whom was ſuch a *Mixture* of Majeſty and Clemency) *That they who durſt Venture upon him; did not know his*

Greatneſs: And they who would not make bold with him, did not know his Sweetneſs. So is the *Glory* of God attemper'd with his *Mercy*, that the bright Reſplendent *Perfections*, do not ſo much *Check* our Approaches to him; as *Inacceſſible*: But the ſweet Gracious *Attributes* do as much *Imbolden* our Applications unto him, as the *Beſt* and *Deareſt* of all our Friends. Here the moſt High *Condeſcends* to us, who elſe could never *Aſcend* to Him. And this may make us in *Love* with our Prayers, that they bring us to *our God*, and *our Father*. For what a Pleaſure do we take, to be near to our Great and Sure *Friends*? And to have Free and Familiar *Intercourſe* and Converſation with him? And when it is, *God my God!* Then it is, *Early will I ſeek thee: My Soul thirſteth for thee: My Fleſh longeth after thee*, Pſal. 63. 1. *Then will I go to the Altar of God, to God my Exceeding Joy: yea upon the Harp will I Praiſe thee, O God my God*, Pſal. 43. 4. And though we are involved in *Troubles*, yet we Chear up our *dejected* Souls, as it follows there, and bid them *Hope in him; For we ſhall yet Praiſe him, who is the Health of our Countenance, and our God.*

If the Lord be *thy God*, this will make *Amends* for all that thou canſt *Loſe* or *Suffer* in the World. O, how *large* Expectation mayſt thou have from him? And what mayſt thou not *Aſk* and *Have* at his Hand? who has given thee *Himſelf*? This puts Life and Heart into thy *Prayers*, and Raiſes and Engages thy Eternal *Thanks*: That the Lord is *thy God*, and thou haſt free *Acceſs* to him, and canſt make *Bold* with him; and ſhall ſtill be *Car'd* for by him; and Receive a *Child's* Portion from him; and

and be for ever *Bleſſed* with him. No *Cordial* in the World ſo reviving as that, Iſaiah 25. *O. Lo, this is our God: We have waited for him, and he will Save us.* And Chap. 61. 10. *My Soul ſhall be Joyful in my God: For he hath Cloathed me with the Garments of Salvation.*

Poor Chriſtian! Be thou never ſo *Low* in the World, *Well* it is with thee, and *Happy* ſhalt thou be: If ſo highly favoured with this Bleſſed *Privilege*, to have the Lord for *thy God.* Take *Comfort* in it; make thy *Advantage* of it; let thy Prayers be *Endeared* by it; and Raiſe thy Heart in *Thankfulneſs* for it. My *Houſe*, my *Lands*, my *Money*, my *Credit*, my *Friends*, my *Intereſt* in the World! All theſe are Contemptible, and nothing to the Bliſs of *Adoption. My God! my God!* is worth Infinitely more than them *All.* And it is as much as all your *Prayers* are worth, to have this *Witneſs of the Spirit with your Spirits, that you are the Children of God.* For then you ſhall be ſure to be *Heard* and *Anſwered*, *Pitied* and *Spared*, *Helpt* and *Relieved* by your Father. *God, even your own God ſhall Bleſs you.* And what cannot the *Greateſt* of all *Powers*, and what will not the *Beſt* of all *Fathers*, do for you? Come what will; happen the worſt that can: *Our God* is able to *Deliver* us: *Our God* will *Stick* to us. In Troubles and in Death, he will be with us. And whoever elſe Fails us, He will *never Leave us, nor Forſake us.* Still we may *Speak* to him; yea, though he Slay us, *Truſt* in him. Still our *Prayers* ſhall come at him, and *Prevail* with him, to bring *Good* even out of the *Evil*; and to *Bleſs* to us, all that *befals* us; that it ſhall be

never the *Worſe*, but Happy for us, it was ſo *Bad* with us.

Thus *Bleſſed*, and *Bleſſed* again are the People who are in ſuch a Caſe, to have the *Lord for their God*. No Queſtion to be made, (you'll ſay) How Sweet and Glorious, beyond Expreſſion, is the *Privilege*, to them that are thus *Inveſted*. But do you ſo Queſtion your own *Title* to it, that this daſhes all the *Comfort* of your ſaying, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*? If you *doubt* ſtill, whether the Lord be *your God*, and that *Deadens* your Prayers, and *Sadens* your Lives: Let me then ask you, Does it ſo *Trouble* you indeed? And do you ſo *Prize* the Heavenly Gift, that you long not ſo much for any thing in the World? Why even that, I cannot but take for ſome hopefull *Diſcovery*, That either you have it, or ſtand in the *fair* Way for it. For ſuch as have no *Intereſt* in it, do not uſe to ſhew this *Concern* about it. I cannot here run out into the ways of *Tryal*, or the means of *Acquiſition*. Only this let me tell you in ſhort, and to the preſent purpoſe, That your very *Longing* after God in your *Prayers*, you may Reckon as a Good *Evidence*, that he is *your God*. For the Spirit of *Supplication*, is for certain, the Spirit of *Adoption*. And what is yet *Dubious* and *Wanting* in the Caſe: By this Means you may come to *Clear* it off, and *Fill* it up. For his Promiſe is, *To Give the Holy Spirit to them that Ask him*. And it is by that *Spirit*, you are enabled to ſay, *Abba Father!* So that to go on with your *Prayers*, is the likelieſt Courſe to get above all your *Doubts*, and to fetch down all the *Comforts*. And if you will but *Perſiſt* in them, according to the

Directions

Directions here given, I dare promiſe you, That ye ſhall attain to Anſwer your own *Scruple* in the moſt effectual Manner, and not fail at laſt, to *find* the ſweet Satisfaction which yet you *Want*.

2. Offer all your Worſhip to God, *In the Name of his dear Son.* For it is *through Him, that we all have Acceſs to the Father*, Eph. 2. 8. Yea, *Boldneſs and Acceſs with Confidence through the Faith of Him*, Chap. 3. 12. Himſelf is the *Way*, and the *Door* of our Admiſſion. And there is no other way for *Sinful* Men to get in with a *Holy* God; but by Him, that has made the *Attonement* for their Sins. Our Saviour himſelf has told us, John 14. 6. *No Man comes to the Father, but by me.* How much ſoever this *Way* is come now to be ſpoken *againſt*, even by ſome that Name the Name of *Chriſt*; (and are very *Induſtrious* to Deſtroy their own and others *Comforts*) I ſhall never Truſt to all their Wit and Depth, to find us out a *Better*. But above all the rareſt *Inventions* of any *Men*, I admire this Wiſeſt *Project*, I Adore this kindeſt *Deſign* of the moſt Gracious *God*. And I am Amaz'd and Sorry, that any Reputed *Chriſtians* ſhould be ſo much their own Enemies, as to ſtand off from *Submitting to this Righteouſneſs of God*. When the very *Jews* (that have ſince denied the *Meſſias*) did of old look to God for Acceptance only through *Him*. For what elſe was the meaning of their *Praying* ſtill with their Faces towards the *Ark of the Covenant*: But to Expreſs their Faith in *God* that was to be manifeſted in the *Fleſh*; of whom that *Ark* was the *Type*. And when *Daniel* (that directed

his *Face* the ſame way, in his Worſhip, *Chap.* 6. 10.) begg'd ſo hard of God to be Heard *for the Lord's Sake*, Chap. 9. 17. What *Lord* could he mean, but the ſame whom *David* call'd *his Lord*; that is now Sitting at the *Right Hand* of God?

You muſt look then by *Faith* unto *Jeſus*, if you would have God to look with *Favour* upon your Souls. And thus alſo you may come to get a new Teſtimony of your *Son-ſhip*. For to them that *Believe on the Name of his Chriſt, he gives Power to become the Sons of God*, John 1. 12. Yea thus, for all the Infirmities of your *Prayers*, and the Failings of your *Lives*, yet ſtill you may keep *Hope* and *Comfort* alive in your Souls. When the *Raggedneſs* of your own Righteouſneſs, and even the *Iniquities* of your Holy things Recoil upon you; and let you ſee, that your very Prayers and Virtues need a Merciful *Allowance*, and ſome Worthy *Advocate*, to make them *Authentick* and *Current*, before the *Tribunal* of Heaven: Here you may ſee the Almighty *Helper*, of God's own providing, at hand to *Help* you out: And may *Believe* that you ſhall be Heard, though even your Prayers for *Pardon* be ſuch, as need to be *Pardoned*. For when put into his *Hands*, they are accepted for his *Sake*, where they deſerve but to be rejected for their *Own*. God has Reſpect to the *Covenant*, in which you are, more than to the *Sacrifice*, which you offer. And *Chriſt* is the *Mediator of that Covenant*, Heb. 9. 15. *All the Promiſes of God are made in Him*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Yea the mighty Promiſe, which Comprizes all, even that of *Eternal Life*, 'twas made to him, *Tit.* 1. 2. For to whom elſe could it be made, *before the World*

World began? It was to him, in behalf of all the *Children*, which God would give him. *By him* then you are to *Offer your Sacrifices*. *Heb.* 13. 15. And as the men of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Acts* 12. 20. made *Blastus*, the King's *Chamberlain* their *Friend*, in order to their *Peace*: So make a far *greater* Friend; Even the *Son* of the King Eternal your Friend in the *Court* of Heaven: And by the Mediation of that great *Master of Requests*, you shall *Speed* and Prevail; for *Peace*, and all that ever you would have.

The Conscience of *Sin*, and the Experience of your own *Inability* to do any thing as you ought, will pull down your *Courage*, and Nip and Blast all your Comfortable *Expectations* at the Throne of Grace: If you have not one there, that Deserves *Better* than you, to be *Heard* for you. But when the Hands are *Faint* and the Knees *feeble*, and the Burden *Heavy*: Yet there's a *Support*, yea the matter of *Rejoycing*, even under all the *Load* of Sin and Trouble; That there is the *Holy One* of God, and the *Beloved* of his Soul, Appearing Above on *your behalf*. And he *maketh Intercession for the Transgressors*. And God will not only Glorify his *Mercy*, but his *Son*; In Granting Pardon, and all that is asked in his *Name*, (granting it) for his *Sake*. Do not therefore Despond, Because all is *Imperfect* that comes from you; and nothing done by you, but what needs *Pity* and *Pardon*: Nor grow Heartless to use your *Prayers*, Because you can make no Better *Work* of them; and still you find them such poor *sorry* Services: For even the *Evil* that you see in them, may do you this *Good*; To make you Look *beyond*

them; and ſend you away to the only *Saviour*, for that *Reſt*, which is no where on this Side him, (No not in the beſt of your *Duties*) to be found. But in *Him*, you may *Find* it: And Coming to Him, He has *Promiſed* to Give it. Do as well as you can, then: And though it be very *Short* and *Faulty* ſtill; Yet Cheer up, and Go on Sowing in *Hope*, Becauſe you have One to undertake your *Cauſe*, and to ſet you *Right*. And it is not for the *Worth* of your *Prayers*, But for the *Merits* of your *Saviour*, that God Accepts you, in the *Beloved* of his Soul.

3. That you may have more *Comfort* in the Holy Offices, Join to your Prayers, your *Thanks* and *Praiſes*. Be not all in *Confeſſing*, *Begging*, *Complaining*, and *Crying out*: But obſerve all the Matter that you have for *Thankſgiving*. And be as Ready to Acknowledge your *Receits*, as to Crave Supply of your *Wants*. If you complain of Burdens and Sorrows, Do not make your Lives more Sad and Heavy than your *Need*; by Depriving your ſelves of thoſe Joys and *Refreſhments* which your Heavenly Father not only *Allows*, but *commands* you, to take. Do not Sullenly *Hang your Harps upon the Willows*; when he bids you Take *them* down, and *Recreate* your weary Troubled Spirits, with this Heavenly *Muſick*. For Religion is not a *Sowre* and *Melancholly* thing; If you do not *make* it ſo. But it is the *way* of Peace, and the *well ſpring* of Everlaſting Conſolation. You may *Serve the Lord with Gladneſs*; yea, and you ought *to Rejoice in him evermore*: Even when you find *Tribulation* in the world:

And

And *in every thing, to give thanks*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 18. Even in *Loſſes* and *Croſſes*, which the World counts the *Worſt* things. For it is *Good to be Afflicted*. And will not you then *Thank* him that does you *Good*? Though the By-Standers may take it to be nothing but *Evil*: When the Gloomy *Cloud* drops *Fatneſs*, and the ſeeming *Sharpneſs*, is his Real *Kindneſs*; Not to let you *Periſh* indeed, for want of that which he knows to be the *Preſervative*, to keep you from it. And if this *Grieves* you, and that goes *Croſs* with you, and the t'other makes *againſt* you: Yet ſtill you have a *Hundred* things, which call for *Thankfulneſs* from you: For all that ever has been *Enjoyed* by you, and all that yet *Remains* to you. When you are out of the Deſerved *Hell*, and Receive at the Lord's Hands Still a great deal more *Good* than *Evil*, and even *Nothing* to the *Wages* of your Sins.

O then let not every Diſaſter and Ailment *Damp* your Thanks and Praiſe, Not be Querulous, and in the Dumps, out of Humour, and all on the Fret, when every thing is not to your *Minds*: Or when any Affliction is laid upon your Loyns. As ſome will Whine and Clamour, yea Rant and Ruffle; as if they would fall out and Fight with *Heaven*: And ſo ſpoill and hinder their *Praying*, as well as their *Thankſgiving*: When any Calamity lights upon them, or any Damage and Injury is done them. Which is not only Perverſe *Unmannerly* Carriage towards the great Lord of all; Who has the whole *Authority*, (as he pleaſes,) to Order us; And ſtill deals much *Better* than we might expect by us: And

ſuch

ſuch as have the Leaſt *Cauſe*, do often ſhew the moſt *Impatience*; and of all the *Various* things, for which they have to give *Thanks*, they can ſcarce find in their hearts, to be *Thankful* for any *One*: as if all were ſtill Below their *Worth*, and Nothing *Good* enough for them: But this Ingrateful Grumbling Temper alſo Deſtroys all the ſweet *Peace* and Comfort of their Lives, that harbour it: *And* makes them as *Uneaſy* to themſelves, as they are Rude and *Troubleſome* to others: Even ever out of *Tune*, and Unacquainted with that *Joyful and Pleaſant thing to be Thankful*, *Pſal.* 147. 1. And herein are put quite to *Confuſion*, by many poor *Afflicted* Creatures, that can yet be *Decent* and *Cheerful*, Even when they have almoſt nothing to be ſeen but *Hardſhips*, *and Bruiſes* in the World.

O you know not what Sweetneſs you Loſe, For want of this Exerciſe, This Spiritual *Recreation*, To be *Thankful to the Lord*, *and Bleſs his Name*. When it is ſo *Pleaſant*, Pſal. 135. 3. He ſaid it, who knew it by a *Joyful Experience*. For who more *Abounded* in God's *Praiſes* than Himſelf, And more call'd upon others to come into the *Conſort*? As you may ſee throughout the *Pſalms*. And many a *Pſalm*, which he Begins *with Complaining*, He Ends with *Thankſgiving*. And when you have ſuch frequent *Occaſions* of Thankfulneſs, in the Mercies that *Come* ſo *Thick* upon all every day, That I dare not undertake to *Enumerate* all, which even the *Pooreſt* Receives: Yet can you find none but the *Jarring Strings* of Greivances, to Grate upon? Not ſo much as this Bleſſed *Advantage* of the ſweet and happy *Opportunities* with God, that

that you may all have, even when you will: Shall it not be Own'd to his Praiſe and your Comfort? O will you not only Rob the Lord of his Glory, but your Souls alſo of the *Pleaſure*, to *Recount* his Mercies and *Bleſs* him for them? To *Chew* upon the Delicious *Morſels*, and make you *Reliſh* the Favours of Heaven: And not only find the Refreſhing *Taſt* of Bleſſings *Received*, But *Prepare* you ſtill for all further Bleſſings *Deſired*? O Sprinkle more of this *Spice* all over your *Oblations*, And be not *Niggards* here, to your own Dear *Souls*: But let them have a larger Share in theſe *Feſtival* Entertainments of all the Bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven. Here play the *Epicures*; And let your *Souls Delight themſelves in Fatneſs*. Yea let them be *Satisfied, as with Marrow and Fatneſs, when your Mouths praiſe the Lord with Joyful Lips*, Pſal. 63. 5.

I am the more upon this, Becauſe, I fear, there is more *Diſcontent*, than *Thankfulneſs*, in moſt Families. Though all (if they would ſee it,) have more Cauſe to give *Thanks*, than to make *Complaints*. And that I might alſo take off the *Prejudice*, that lies in ſo many Minds againſt a *Serious* Religion; for the *Sadneſs*, which they take to be in it; As if they muſt take leave of all *Joy*, when they turn over to this *Way*; Which indeed would bring them into the Poſſeſſion of *Better* Joys, than ever they *Taſted* in their Lives. Do not think then, That I call you to a *Doleful* Buſineſs, in Calling you to your *Prayers*. When to all well-diſpoſed Souls, they are ſo full of Sweetneſs even in *themſelves*. And I alſo tell you, How to make them yet *Sweeter*; By *Expatiating* more in thoſe Rich and Fragrant Fields

Fields of *Thankſgiving*, and all the Joyful *Praiſes* of God; where you may *Solace* your ſelves, even as *often*, and as *much* as you pleaſe. I would not help to *Sadden* your Lives; but to make them indeed *Eaſy*, and full of the *Beſt* Comforts. By Adviſing you to Pour out your *Heavy* Hearts; and Caſt all your *Burden* upon the Lord; And then to Raiſe thoſe Hearts up, in the *Admiration* of his Love, and the *Celebration* of his Praiſe. *To make Melody in your Hearts*: And ſometimes alſo with your *Mouths*; In *Pſalms*, and *Hymns*, and *Spiritual Songs*; *Singing*, as well as *Speaking* the Praiſe of the Lord. And O that you would not here be *Enemies* to your own Joy and beſt Delight! But take the way to be out of *Care*, and out of *Pain*. The way, not only *Preſcribed* by me, but by the *Apoſtle*, *Phil.* 4. 6, 7. *Be Careful for nothing; but in every thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſts be made known to God. And the Peace of God which paſſeth all Underſtanding, ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Chriſt Jeſus.*

7. Let your Prayers be made with *Zeal* and *Fervency* of Spirit. And be in *Earneſt* with them, that you may be indeed the *Better* for them. Do not think it enough to *Say* over ſo many *Words*; or, to *Say* out ſuch a *Time*. But put forth your ſelves, in the *Service*, As the *Greateſt Work*, wherein you can ever be Concerned. When there is the *Carkaſs*, without a *Soul*; The *Form of Godlineſs*, and nothing of the *Power*; only a *Face* of Religion, but the *Life* Departed; no *Fire* on the Altar; No *Heart* in the Sacrifice; The very Devotion *Inbrutes*; As Dull as *Lead*, and as Cold as *Ice*; Such an

Obla-

Oblation is not only *Vanity*, but *Abomination*. Ah Lord! What a *Preſent* is this, for the *Living* God, The *Searcher* of Hearts, The great *King*, The *Lord of Hoſts*, whoſe *Name is Dreadful among the Heathen*? Though Zeal does not lye all in *Noiſineſs*; A great Cry, and nothing elſe: A Forced *Tone*, and Unnatural *Heat*: Yet when the Words come *Warm* from the *Heart*: And a *Senſible* Heart Pours out its *Abundance*, in a *Lively* Voice; It is very *Affecting* both to Speaker and Hearers. And ſuch *Ardour* ſends up the *Incenſe*, and makes the Soul *Aſcend*, as in a *Fiery Chariot*.

But do not count it your Zeal, To *Huddle* over Words, as Faſt as you can ſpeak; And ſo *Haſten* to the End, as to let your Tongues *Outrun* your Attention; And *Baffle* the quickeſt Apprehenſion, for being able to keep *Pace*. It would be more Adviſable, to have your Words *Fewer*; ſo that they were Conſidered *better*; and that you might have more *Leiſure* to Feel, and Taſte, and Digeſt your Prayers. For 'tis not to *Devour* a great deal; but to *Feed* upon as much as you are *Capable* of. I ſay, To *Feed* upon it, and make your utmoſt *Benefit* of it. And with that *Proviſo*, Be as *Hot* upon it as you can.

O *Stir up yourſelves to take hold of the Lord.* And ſhew that you really do *Mind* the Buſineſs that you are about; and do Heartily *Engage* in it. Set God, and Heaven, and Death, and Hell, before you: To *Rouze* up your Sluggiſh Hearts, and make you *Struggle* the harder in your Prayers. Nay, learn from the very *Beggers* at your *Doors*, to be as Earneſt with God in your Houſes. How hard will the poor Wretch beg, but for a Piece of *Bread*, or a

Cup

Cup of *Drink*? And not give o're, nor be *Quiet*, till they have got it? And does it not much more Concern you to be *Importunate* for the Bread of *Life*, and the Cup of *Salvation*? That your poor *Souls* may not ſtarve and periſh for ever? But do you think that *God* will Regard you, when your ſelves do not *Regard* what you ſay? When you Sleepily tell over an old *Tale* of ſo many Words, with not half ſo much Concern, as a Beggar will do for a *Cruſt*?

And though you cannot be Intent upon every *Word* and Particular throughout the Prayers; yet ſee that you keep up a Zealous *Concern*, and a Devout *Frame* of Spirit, quite to the *End*. And let not the *Shell* and *Husk* of the Duty content you, but preſs on to the Inward Heavenly *Beneſit* Everlaſting. And when ye are to *Draw nigh* to God, let not your *Hearts* be out of the way, but bear the *Chiefeſt* part of all in the Service.

Do not throw the Prayers off ſo *Late* at Night, till the Hearts that ſhould be liſted up to *God*, be pull'd down with *Sleep*. And one is *Nodding* here; and another there quite *gone*; like ſo many dead *Logs*. And all *Long* to have the Hindrance out of the way, that they may be gone to their *Beds*. But let Him that gives *All*, have of the *Beſt* from you. And what you do to the *Lord your God*, do it with all your *Heart*, with all your *Soul*, and with all your *Might*.

Whoever make a *Jeſt* of your *Earneſt*, Scorn the *Zeal*, and call it More Ado than *Needs*, ſo to *Abound in the Work of the Lord*: And think you would be more *Wiſe*, if you did *Leſs*: Crying,

Crying, What a *Work* is here with their *Praying*? Why cannot they put off God with a *Compliment*, as the Common *Worshippers* do? And only *Riddle* over a few Words of Course, and call that Prayer *Sufficient*? Regard not so much, What they say against you, (who would shew more Wisdom to be Imployed with you): As you regard, What an All-deciding *Judge* you attend, and what an Important *Business* you have in Hand: 'Tis the Judge that must *Doom* you, and all the World for ever: And 'tis the Matter of Life and Death *Eternal*. And in such a Case, you may as much *Scorn* the *Scorner*, as *David* despis'd the Taunts of his good *Partner*. When *Michal*, the Wife that was *Tit'd* with him, Drew another *Way* from him: And what was his *Meat*, was her *Poyson*: When she made a *Game* of his *Transport*, for *Dancing with all his Might, before the Ark of God*, and Jeer'd him, as you may find, 2 *Sam.* 6. 20. *How Glorious was the King of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the Eyes of the Handmaids, his Servants, as one of the Vain Fellows, shamefully Uncovers himself?* q. d. 'Twas a fine *Sight* to see a *King* make such a *Fool* of himself. He told her, *It was before the Lord*; and so not his *Vanity*, but his *Piety*. Therefore her *Scoffs* should not bring him to confess it a *Fault*. *But if that were to be Vile, he would be more Vile than so.* And thus still, with *Epicures* and *Worldlings*, the whole Generation of God's Children go for a Company of *Impertinent* Busy-bodies: Yet at the same time, their better Practice condemns all the Tribe of *Epicures* and *Worldlings*, for a Company of Ungodly *Truants*, that stand Staring and Laughing at others Zeal and Devotion;

tion; when it infinitely *Behoves* them to ſhew their *Own*. Go on then with *Diligence* about your Heavenly Father's *Buſineſs*, as thoſe that are Playing a *Prize*, for *Eternity*. And they that now deride your *Simplicity*, ſhall one day Wiſh, and Wiſh again, that they had born you *Company*.

8. Look to your *Converſation*, as well as to your *Supplication*. See that your Houſes be *Regular* in other Reſpects, as well as in the *Periodical* Returns of Prayer; that your *Carriage* may be of a piece with the *Worſhip*. For when the Houſe is *Divided*, and all in *Uproare*, Torn with *Striſe*, and Fir'd with *Wrath*: When it Rings with Peals of *Oaths* and *Curſing*, *Ranting* or *Scolding*: When it is Smutt'd with *Covetouſneſs*, or Diſſolv'd in *Wantonneſs*: Set up with *Pride*, or pull'd down with profuſe Conſuming upon *Luſt*: When the *Houſe* is like a Hold of *Rebels*, where the *Crew* of God's *Worſt* Enemies find the *Beſt* welcome: And from Morning till Night, nothing like *Holy Religion*, or ſo much as any *Good Order* to be ſeen among them: Good God! What a *Preparation* is here to Prayer? What Kin is ſuch *Wild* doing to the *Pious* Worſhipping? And well may ſuch Family-Members *ſhark* away from the daily Prayers, and be aſhamed to hold up their *Heads* before the Lord at *Prayer-Times*; when they uſe him ſo baſely at all *other Times*. I cannot wonder, that Men who lead ſuch *Diſorderly* Lives, (they can but ſeldom come Home *Sober* to their Houſes, if they meet any *Temptation* by the way, that they) are ſo little *Friends* to Prayers; and can neither *skill of*, nor *away with* ſuch kind of

Exerciſes.

Exerciſes. And where all the *Strings* are ſo much out of *Tune*, what Muſick are they like to make in the *Conſort*: Nay, when thoſe whom God hath *Joyned* together, *Divided* themſelves aſunder; and the *Husband* and *Wife* fly upon one another like *Infernal Furies*: Or can only ſometimes Hit it off, as *Laſcivious Brutes*: No wonder if by ſuch Living *allowed*, the Prayers be *Hindred*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. Yea, worſe yet, when *Whoredom* takes away the *Heart*, and ſtrange *Fires*, with their *Sulphurous* Stench, prevail over all the Love of *God*, and all the right worthy Affection to *Men*: Their *Prayers* then (if they do make any) carry ſo ill a *Savour*, Noiſome to Heaven and Earth, that God *Abhors* them; and the *World* cries, Let them amend their *Lives*, or what ſignify their *Prayers*?

And after all that I have ſaid for the *Family-Supplication*, I muſt tell you, That this will be in *Vain*, without *Family-Reformation*. Nor will it do you any good, to have ſome *Prayers* in your Houſes *Obſerved*, when the very *Walls* of your Houſes cry out againſt you, for the Wickedneſs there *Harboured*. But an *Upright* Heart, and a *Godly* Life, (next the Blood of Chriſt) has the moſt powerful *Oratory*, to prevail with Heaven, and will ſpeak *Better* for you, than all the *Words* of Prayer, and all the Importunity, of *Lord, Lord*: For you may read of thoſe, whom he ſaid *he would not Hear*, *though they made many Prayers*, Iſaiah 1. 15. But you ſhall find ſuch as never fail to ſpeed in any Requeſts, 1 John 3. 22. *Whatever we Aſk, we Receive of Him; becauſe we keep his Commandments, and do thoſe things that are Pleaſing in his ſight.* This Care and Conſcience to *Pleaſe* the Lord, will

will give you ſuch a *Recommendation* with him, that you ſhall never find the *Repulſe* from him. But indeed, it is much about one, whether you have *Prayers* or no *Prayers*, if you can Reconcile the *daily Praying* with *Ungodly Living*, and continue as *Impenitent* in your Sins, as *Conſtant* in your Prayers.

O then Repent and *Turn to the Lord*, as well as *Call upon his Name*. And not only down upon your *Knees*, but down with your *Sins*. Caſt the *Curſed* things out of your *Houſes*, and your *Hearts*, that will not let the Lord *Dwell* with you, nor look with *Favour* upon you; but make his *Holy* things *Pain* and *Grief* to you, His *Preſence* to *Duſh* you, and his *Worſhip* to *Torment* you. Though I do not, in this Life, expect any *Converſion* without *Imperfection*; or that you ſhould ſo Turn to the *Lord*, as to Turn all Sin out of your *Souls*. I do not look to find the *Families*, or the *Chriſtians* without *Faults*. Yet I would have you to *Bewail* as much as you cannot *Cure*; and not to Beg the Grace, which you would not have; nor Pray againſt the *Sins* which you do not mean to *Leave*. I would have your Lives free from open *Scandals* before the World; and your Hearts free from allowed *Hypocriſy* in the Sight of God. And ſo to Keep your *Hearts*, and Order your Lives, that you may not loſe all the *Labour* of your Prayers. O Make not Prayers the *Aſylum*, to Shelter any Wickedneſs, but the *Battery*, to maul and break it to pieces: That in the Name of the Lord, you may *Deſtroy* it, and by his *Strength* (call'd in with your Prayers) you may *Surmount* and get above it. And with ſuch *Simplicity* and Godly *Sincerity*, carry towards the great

Overſeers

Overſeer of your Hearts and Lives, that you may be *Bold* in your God, and *Delight* to come to him, and ſtill find the ſweet *Welcome* with him.

And now having given you the *Reaſons* for your Family Prayers, and put to *Confuſion* (if not to Silence) the *Exceptions* againſt them: And produced thoſe *true Cauſes* of the Neglect, which are not for the Credit of any Prayerleſs Families to be mentioned: And having ſhewed both how it ſhould be *Timed*, and alſo *Managed*; O that I could Perſuade and Prevail with all that knew themſelves Faulty, to Break the Ungodly Cuſtom, and to get over the *Barricado's*, that ſo long have Stopt and Detain'd them: Before the Lord come and ſtop their Breath, and break in with his Fury upon them. And when all that any have to *Object*, is ſo frivolous; that I ſhould ſcarce have anſwer'd, if I had not thought it more to *Need*, than to *Deſerve* the Anſwer: O that you would fall from your *Excuſes* to your *Prayers*, and not ſtand alledging this and the t'other, which you will not dare to mention, when your Judge comes to Call you to Account; or if you ſhould, you ſhall not then be Heard. And ſhould you ſuffer the deadly Enemy of Souls, and of Prayers, to *Gag* and *Muzzle* you now, you'll be ſtruck *Speechleſs* then. For *Conſcience* will tell you, what you *ſhould* have done, and what you *might* have done. And being ſo *Self-condemned*, it will be Vain then to *Speak*. But you'll depart from the Lord, and go away with the *Curſe* upon you, for a moſt *Silly*, as well as *Ungodly* Company, that you would not come to Him, nor have the Mercy, becauſe you would not ſo much

as

as *Aſk* it, in the Time when it was to be obtained. O prevent that Deſperate *Madneſs*, with which you will then fall *Foul* upon yourſelves, if ſtill you Refuſe to make your Advantage of the *Price* put into your *Hands*. Prevent the dreadful Crying out *too Late*, by Crying mightily to God, while he gives you *Leave* and *Opportunity* for it; yea, when he gives you *Charge* and *Command* to it. O think it a *Happy* Word, that *God* ſhould *ſay* to every one of you, as *Agrippa* did to *Paul*, Acts 26. 1. *Thou art permitted to Speak for thy ſelf.* Then Reckon and Reſolve with yourſelves, we will not loſe the Eternal Bleſſing for *want* of our Speaking. We will *Uſe* our Time, and take the *Liberty*; and with all our Souls, be *Thankful* to the Bleſſed *Giver*. Not flying for Shelter here, only in ſome Dark and *Perilous* Days, or under ſuch grievous Preſſures that *Extort* it from us: But be *Conſtant* to it, as to all the things that we have moſt Need of in the World.

Now, you do not think a *Meal*, or a *Nap* once in a Week, or once in two or three Days, enough for your *Bodies*: But you are at your Meals every *Day*, and at your Reſt every *Night*; and apt to think it much, if you want but one Day's *Food*, or but one Night's *Sleep*. And I muſt tell you, ye are under a wicked Miſtake, if you do not think your *Prayers* to be of greater *Concern* to you, than your Diet, or your Rayment, or your Natural Repoſe. For though Deſtitute of theſe, you may have God's Love, and be Happy for ever. But without your Prayers, you are without *God* in this *World*, and like to be *Loſt* Creatures Eternally in the *Next*. Do you find the Need then of *Daily Bread*,

Bread, and not of *Daily Prayer*? And what that is Good can you think of yourſelves, when *Hardned* in this Neglect? Shall *Jews* have *Morning* and *Evening* Sacrifice every Day? And ſhall *Chriſtians*, that are ſo much Oblig'd to God, have *Leſs*? Nay, ſhall *Papiſts*, *Turks*, and *Ethnicks*, make their *Daily* Prayers? And ſhall any that call themſelves *Reformed*, and Profeſs ſo much a *Better* Religion, lead more Ungodly *Lives*, and make no *Conſcience* of their Prayers? We may *Proteſt* againſt ſuch *Proteſtants*, that are as the *Scabs* and *Botches* of our *Church*, and live in it only to *diſgrace* it, and to *plague* it. And may you all better Remember yourſelves, and Return to your Lord, and *Cleave* to Him, and *Keep* in with Him.

O that you may be here Determined, and ſo *Setled* in this way of Duty, that all the World may not put you beſide it! And ſo make it your *Cuſtom*, that you may be Known by it, and let all Men know that you will not break it. Men uſe to be Fond and *Tenacious* of Cuſtoms, though they be none of the beſt, too often ſome of the Worſt. O that you would make your Prayers ſo much your *Habit*; that here you may Plead your *Cuſtom*, and ſet up your Reſolution; ſo I have *Inur'd* my ſelf to do, and ſo I will do. I am clearly for it, whatever I hear againſt it. Nothing ſhall Pull me from God. In his Service, ſo long I have liv'd, and no Cauſe have I ~~have~~ to Complain, but abundant Obligation to be Thankful. No Reaſon do I find to *Deſert*, but the ſtrongeſt *Motives* to *Perſiſt*. For never can I Serve a Lord ſo *Good*, never wait on any that can do for me ſo *Well*. Therefore what I have *Begun*, I will *Carry* on. And what

what I have done in the Daily Worſhip of God aforetime, ſo I will continue to do as long as I have any Time.

You may read how the Devout *Daniel*, *Chap.* 6. 10. would ſtill go on Praying to his God, even in the Face of Danger, and juſt before the Mouths of the *Lions*: Under that Bloody *Interdict*, which made his *Duty* like to coſt him ſo Dear as his *Life*; yet he would not endure to have ſuch an *Embargo* laid on his *Prayers*, nor ſuffer the ſevereſt *Menace* to Terrify him out of the only Refuge for a diſtreſſed Soul; but would let all Men ſee, That he did not Serve the God whom he was *Aſham'd* or *Afraid* to Own. Though, no doubt, but he was ſufficiently *Tongue-Laſht* among the Profane Spectators of his Devotions, as a very Silly Ridiculous *Preciſian*, that could not forbear his Accuſtomed Praying; at leaſt, when ſuch a *Knack* and Capital Puniſhment was laid upon it. What does the Man mean ſo to throw away his *Life*? Or does he think to Court the *Lions* with his *Prayers*? Or to Blunt the Edge of their *Teeth* with this Breath of his *Mouth*? Yet all could not take him off, but ſtill he proceeded in the *wonted* way of his Worſhip.

Now this he did in ſuch a *Perilous* Time: And will not ſome of you be brought to pay your Lon. this *Homage* in a Time of *Safety* and *Liberty*? When there is no *Lion* in the way, but of your own Fancy; when to do it, is not at your *Peril*; but inſtead of any to *Deter* you from it, you are *Solicited* and Call'd upon to do it? Yea, and told what a Shame, and Scandal, and Danger, it is for you to leave it undone? How you venture upon the *Roaring Lion*

Lion, because you will not Fly for Succour to the *God* of your Salvation. And what will you Answer to him, if thus you Persist, I say not, to Serve him, but to Neglect him, and to *Despise* and *Slight* his Service? When you will not *Touch* the Burden with one of your Fingers, which you may have the *Honour* and *Praise*, for taking up? And which others would go away with, though it was as much as their *Estates* and *Lives* were worth, to bear it. And even at this day, How many do Smart and Suffer for the *Exercise* of that very Religion, which you are not only *Tolerated*, but Exhorted and *Importuned* to Exercise, yet more and more? And it is not the Devil now as a *Roaring Lion*, that *Affrights* you from it; No, but the Devil, as the *Old Serpent*, that would slily Argue and *Cavil* you out of it! They are such Devils, as I have told you of: The Devil of *Sloth*, the Devil of *Pride*, the Devil of *Prophaneness*, that puts you out of Conceit with it, and makes you rather *Wrangle* at it, than set about it.

And that you may not be carried away with the Stream of *Custom*, down into the Dead Sea of this dangerous Neglect: O look not so much upon the *Way* of the World, as to the *End* of the World. For though now you may Account the Jolly *Libertines* that scorn Prayer, Brave and Happy; and of the *Praying-Families*, may Think and Speak as Base and *Disdainfully*; yet when you shall come to take your last *Leave* of this World, I know of which then you will like the *Better*, and whether of them you'll reckon the *Happier*. And when our *Lord* shall come to *Judge* the World, I know, with which *Sort* you would be glad to be *Found*. However

you had rather *Live* with the One, I am ſure, you would wiſh to *Dye* with the Other. O then do not Stifle your *Convictions*, nor loſe your *Opportunities*, while they are before you. Do not put off the Work of *Life*, till you reach to the very *Period* and Concluſion of your Lives. To let nothing but the Stroke of *Death* juſt ſeizing your Souls, drive you to your Prayers, and then only to *Breathe* them out, when you ſhall be Breathing your *Laſt*; To *Defer* the Pious Orders of your Houſe, till Death is coming to *Break* up the Houſe. But learn Wiſdom betimes, and Cry now while you may be Heard, leaſt you be forc'd to ſet up the hideous *Outcry*, when there ſhall be no *Hearing*. O ſee at laſt, the ſoul pernicious Error. And let me beſeech you, for your own dear Souls ſakes, to amend this Matter. And let the Sinful *Omiſſion* be made up by you, before the *Doom* of the *Slothful* Servant be paſt upon you. Let none of your *Houſes* be a Day longer without *God*, and without his Holy *Fear*, and his Devout *Worſhip*. But Reſolve quickly, with the Heavenly, as well as Honourable, *Herbert*,

I and Dear Prayer will together Dwell.

Admit and Welcome this *Gueſt* into your Houſes, as one of the *Beſt* that ever came there. And if you look for Everlaſting *Reſt* with God; now better *Reſtir* you for him. Humble your Souls before him for *Loitering* ſo long, and *Trifling* ſo much, as you have done. Confeſs it, and beg Pardon for it. And Pray, and Reſolve, and Strive, that it may be ſo no more: That you may follow better *Examples*, and yourſelves

come

come to ſet better *Patterns*. And make ſuch *Conſcience*, yea, and take ſuch *Delight*, to keep up the *Daily* Worſhip of God in your ſeveral *Houſes*: That your *Children* may Bleſs God, that ever they had ſuch *Parents*: That your *Servants* may Bleſs God, that ever they had ſuch *Maſters*: And that I may Bleſs God, that I have not loſt my *Labour*, nor your *Love*, by this Work. And that yourſelves, when *Death* comes to ſhew you the Bleſſed *End*, whither the Way of *Prayer* leads, may Bleſs the *Lord* for *Putting* you upon it, and *Keeping* you in it: And for giving you the *Encouragement* to make your Supplications to him, that ſo he might have the *Occaſion* to make you Happy, with all the Unſpeakable Gifts of his Everlaſting Bounty.

Thus I have uſed great *Plainneſs* of Speech, and ſpent all my Power of *Perſuaſion*. I cannot tell what will be the Succeſs; but am Senſible, That I have been *Rouzing* among many Families, where I am like to find ſmall *Welcome*; but as many Complaints of my *Over-Officiouſneſs*, as I have made of their *Under-doings*. From ſuch I may expect to hear, *Pragmatical*, and a Buſy-Body in other's Matters: As much as I call *Slothful* and Negligent in their Heavenly Father's Buſineſs. They may ask, Why cannot I let *them* alone? And I muſt Confeſs, I have as much Reaſon to let them alone, as they have to let alone *His* Work that *Made* them. But ſome may Hear more of what they Call this *Heavy Cry* from me; till I Hear more of the *Heavenly Cry* from them. For where I ſee ſo many (and ſeveral of them my *Friends*) Poſſeſs'd with ſuch a *Dumb Devil*, I find it very hard to *Forbear* Speaking.

Though it may look like the *Troubling* my ſelf to make others *Uneaſy*: I had rather do ſo, than they ſhould be for ever *Unhappy*. The Sound of this *Bell*, though none of the Sweeteſt, (but ſuch as will be thought Shrill and Harſh in many Ears) yet if it prove but *Loud* enough to Awaken ſuch as I intend, I have my *Deſign*. And therefore I would have it Sound, not only throughout my *Neighbourhood*, but all over the *Land*. For I have Cried, and Cried again, to ſome a great part of my Life; And if I can find no better *Audience* than hitherto, I ſhall leave this *Bell* to Ring a *Peal* in their Ears. And this little *Book*, like a *Spirit*, to Haunt their *Houſes* after my Death. And ſuch a *Trouble Houſe*, I am contented to be thought, if I can but Prevent their *Everlaſting* Trouble. But you know, one that ſaid, *Art thou he that Troubleth Iſrael?* 1 *Kings* 18. 17. was the greateſt *Troubler* of it Himſelf. And let ſuch as here Complain, but Examine themſelves for the *Cauſe*, and they may find a Troubleſome *Companion* in their own Boſoms, that will never let them be at *Reſt*, though I ſhould. I can heartily ſay, as our *Lord* Commands, *Luke* 10. 5. To whatever Houſe I enter, *Peace be to this Houſe*. But if the *Son* of Peace be not there, (i. e. ſuch as are Meet to Receive it) I cannot help it; And that they no better Know the *Way* of Peace, I am ſorry for it. And this is my Deſire, to *Point* out that Way to them, if they will take it. And where I muſt *Loſe* any of my *Friends*, may it be by this *Freedom* and Faithfulneſs with them; and for beſtowing ſuch a Labour of *Love* upon them. May no bigger Hurt come to any of your Houſes. And may they all be as Happy, as I do wiſh them.

them. And then I am ſure it will be much better with them, than any that I here take the Boldneſs to *Copulate* with, go the way to make them.

They are *Ruſul* Dwellings, where *God* is not among them; but all that Belongs to Him is ſet at Naught by them. And ſome of the Houſes whoſe Nakedneſs I have been *Surveying*, they are Worſe than *Meſech* and *Kedar*. 'Tis even as the Mouth of *Hell*, to Dwell in ſuch *Tents* of Wickedneſs. The Lord be Merciful to them, and turn out the great Maſter of *Miſrule*. And take *Poſſeſſion* of them for *Himſelf*: And ſo *New-Model* them, that he may have ſome *better* Service from them, and come yet to take *Pleaſure* in them.

But all the *Bleſſings* of Heaven be the Portion of thoſe *Families*, where God is *daily* and *duly* Call'd upon My Heart is with them; and all the beſt of my Wiſhes are for them. *The Lord Increaſe them more and more, them and their Children.* May they continue ſuch *Shining Lights* in the World; till they come to Shine as the Brightneſs of the *Firmament* in the Kingdom of their *Father*. And may others, at theſe *Torches*, Light their own; yea, ſo may this Light be *Communicated* (as the common Light) to *Propagate* itſelf far and wide throughout the Earth. That ſuch as *See* it, may fall in *Love* with it, and be *Drawn* in by it. And ſay to the *Praying-Families*, as the *Gentiles* to God's *Iſrael*, Zech. 8 23. *We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.*

I have done. The *Lord* Proſper my poor *Warning* with his Heavenly *Bleſſing*; and *Excite* and

Quicken you to Prayer; and Teach and Help you in it; and make you Ready and Mighty at it; yea, well pleas'd and much in Love with it. O that it may be the *Joyful Sound* in every one of your *Houſes*! Daily heard among you, and Duly made by you. That ſo you may Pray down all your *Sins* under your Feet, and Pray down all his *Bleſſings* on your Heads. And never leave off to *Ask*, and *Seek*, and *Knock*, till you have *Receiv'd*, and *found*, and got Heaven *Opened*; and an *Entrance made into the Everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. Where you ſhall find your *Time* thus well beſtow'd, Expiring into the Bleſſed *Eternity*; in which to Enjoy all the Sweet, and precious Fruits of your *Prayers*, and your Redeemer's *Purchaſe* for ever. *Amen.*

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